



EUROPEAN  
NORWAY

17 LIVING  
CITIES 2

COMPETITION  
BRIEF

LARV

# LARVIK

## COMPETITION FACTS

### Prize money:

- 1st prize: 12 000 EUR
- 2nd prize: 6 000 EUR

### Commission for winners:

- Contract valued approximately 1.000.000 NOK for adapting the proposal and working towards realization

### Post competition immediate procedure:

- National workshop with the winners, runners-up and site representatives of Norwegian sites following the award ceremony
- Invited, on-site workshop for winners

### Site representative:

- Larvik municipality

### Actors involved:

- The County municipality, Citizens' Assembly, private investors

### Team representative:

- Architect, urbanist, landscape architect

### Expected skills:

- Multidisciplinary teams with strong skill sets in architecture, heritage, urban design, and participatory design

### Communication:

- Online publication and local exhibition

### Jury

- 1st evaluation with site representatives



The town centre and the harbour are separated by a busy road, a railway line and steep topography. **Design and programme a connection that revitalises and brings the centre and seafront together.**

[CLICK HERE FOR A VIRTUAL TOUR OF LARVIK](#)



## CONTENT

- 2 European 17 — Care
- 3 Competition premise
- 4 Competition assignment
- 5 Competition guidelines
- 6 Commission for the winner(s)
- 7 The future visions of the people
- 8 The Library

### Site context

- 10 Welcome to Larvik
- 11 Larvik in a regional context
- 12 Waiting for Godot
- 13 Town centre strategy for Larvik
- 15 A town shaped by geology and water
- 16 Climate
- 17 Larvikvitt - the blue heart of Larvik
- 18 Historical heritage

### Project site

- 21 The project Site
- 23 Bøkerfjellet - a swiss cheese rock
- 24 Barriers  
Indre Havn
- 25 Reopening the harbour
- 26 Important elements on the site

- 27 The Jury
- 28 About European Norway



# European 17 - Care

One of the many profoundly memorable quotes from the much lauded animated adult show *Bojack Horseman* is when Wanda breaks up with her toxic boyfriend. Asked why she let the relationship go as far as it did, she says something that is just as true for a society obsessed with growth, as it is for abusive relationships:

*“When you look at someone through rosy glasses, all the red flags just look like flags.”*

After a long era of technooptimistic industrialization, the rosy glasses have come off and the flags are everywhere. They are not just red, they are on fire.

As we face unprecedented challenges of climate change, social inequality, and ecological degradation, designing cities that are considerate for the entire biosphere has become an urgent necessity.

However, such a task is fraught with dilemmas. How do we prioritize our needs and desires? How do we balance economic sustainability with social and environmental justice?

Enter care: an approach that doesn't shy away from these challenges. Care is about acknowledging the intrinsic value of everything that surrounds us, from humans to non-humans, and recognizing that they all have the right to exist and flourish. It's not just about understanding, it's also about action. That everything is interconnected and that our actions, or inaction, have far-reaching consequences. Under the paradigm of Care, we can't shy away from taking decisions and acting.

In a culture that celebrates creation, speed and growth, maintenance is often overlooked. But without it, nothing can last. Care takes maintenance to the next level, infusing it with creativity and dedication. We actively care for our children, our gardens, our friends, and communities, and do so with the hope of seeing them flourish. When we apply this same level of care to the design of our cities, they too can become healing, evolving, and make positive contributions to the climate.

It's only by caring that architecture can become regenerative. It's about creating processes and places that give back more than they take, that enhance the well-being of all living beings, and that leave a positive legacy for future generations. Within the framework of care, sustainable solutions that are only "less bad than the alternative others," are not good enough.

Behind the five competitions that make up European 17 in Norway, are coalitions of dedicated people that care. Some of the sites ask for solutions that are almost impossible to fully "solve". It is an acknowledgment of the increasing complexity of urban planning, and that's why they look to European to find new approaches and solutions that lie in the marginal space between what is just, comfortable and safe for humans, and the ceiling of what the ecological and climatic systems of our planet can sustain.

The five Norwegian sites in European 17 have challenges that may be difficult to solve. That is precisely why the five cities choose to ask you, the young architects, landscape architects and urban planners to solve them. They trust that you will dare to care. Dare to take risks, choose to test out new solutions, and see the places as they are for what they can become in the future.

European Norway



# COMPETITION PREMISE

Larvik is a small town characterised by a comfortable climate and natural beauty, but suffers numerous infrastructural and geological limitations, which have burdened town planning and development particularly in recent years.

Larvik is located on a narrow piece of land between the sea and Farris Lake, with rugged topography and a harbour distinctly exposed to the elements. The town's geography is further constricted by regional infrastructure. All rail and car traffic passing from Oslo toward the south of the country is channelled through a small bottleneck between the sea and Farris lake.

To compound matters, the town centre has several areas that are essentially untouchable for future planning, owing to a new railway line project that has been put on hold indefinitely. Already decades in the making, the line would have provided an underground stop in the centre, but also necessitated the demolition of several town blocks. It is currently not possible to plan any long-term uses for the areas potentially affected by the railway, in case the project starts up again.

The old railway tracks are currently blocking Larvik's connection to the harbour. Today the harbour is so disconnected that people prefer to drive the 500 metres up to the town square rather than navigate a maze of obstacles by foot.

Despite the many limitations affecting Larvik's capacity to develop its centre, there are still a few tools hidden at the bottom of the toolbox. Financing has been granted for a new library as well as bridging the barriers between the harbour and the centre. Both of these projects could contribute significantly to revitalizing the centre and connecting the heart of the town to its beautiful harbour once again. Larvik has entered European 17 to get inspiration and direction for how to overcome these tricky barriers.

**We begin by asking: how can programming, public space and historic buildings work together to make the distances in Larvik feel smaller and the town more attractive and accessible?**



The town of Larvik

— Study site  
— Project site





*Larvik's topography is very steep. The main aspect of the competition is to link the harbour and the town through Bøkkerfjellet, here shown from below. (Photo: Larvik Kommune).*

## COMPETITION ASSIGNMENT

The town centre is cut off from the seafront by a busy road, a railway line and steep topography.

The main task is to propose a concept that overcomes these barriers, bridging the gap between Larvik's centre and the seafront.

Explore how this connection, as well as adjoining public spaces, landscape elements and historic buildings, can be programmed and elevated with new features to attract people and revitalise the centre.



Vestre brygge, the most central part of Larvik's harbour, was filled in and paved to make space for parking and a ferry terminal. The concrete elements used are now starting to give away, and it's been decided to return the harbour to its original state. Photo: Larvik municipality



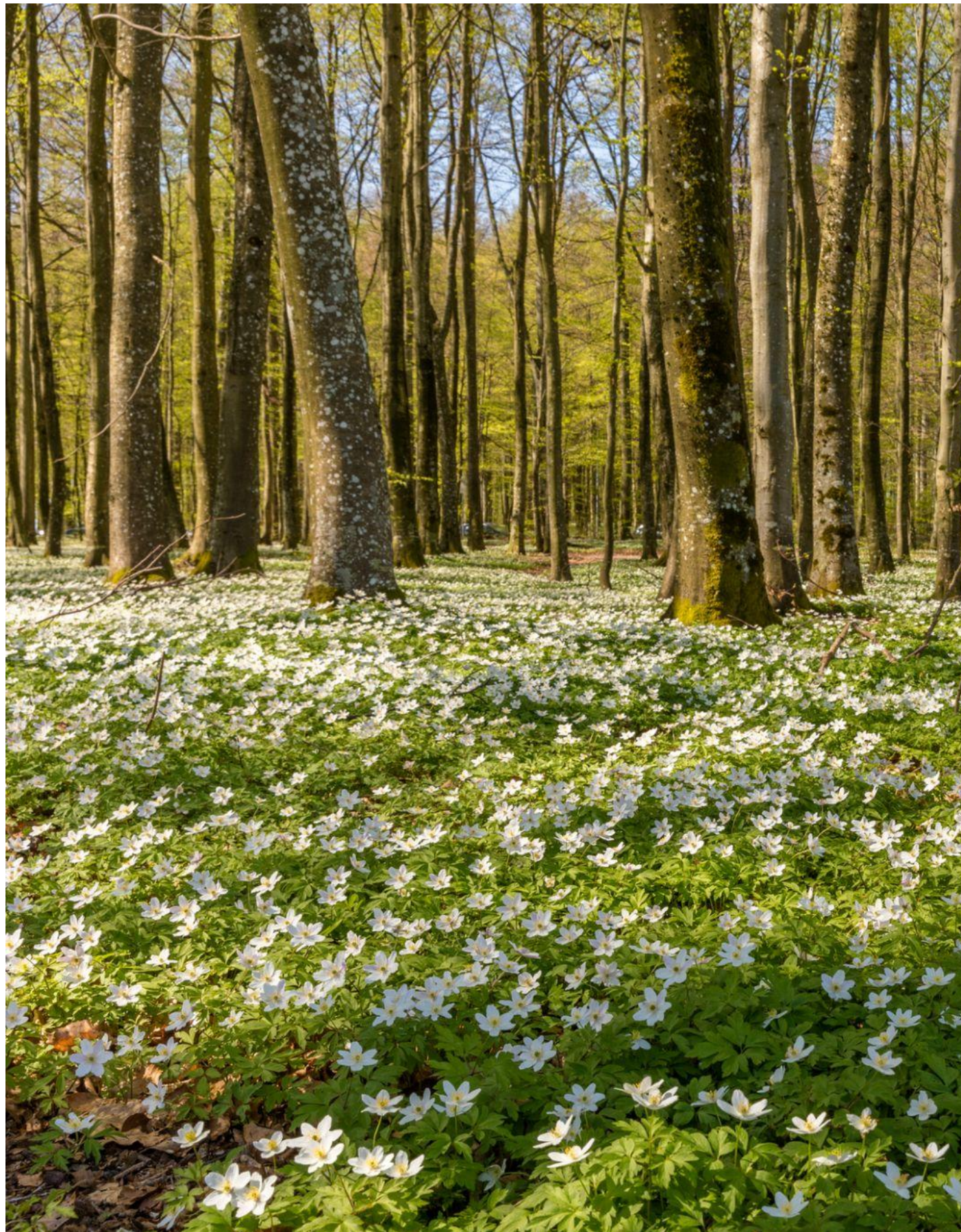
The harbour and Larvik centre seen from the east. Photo: Larvik municipality

## COMPETITION GUIDELINES

This competition is intended to be a key catalyst for a revitalization of the town centre. Below is a list of smaller goals and considerations that the proposals can help address.

- A shorter distance. How do we create an easy and comfortable connection that shortens the distance, both physically and mentally between the centre and the harbour?
- Historic buildings supporting the connection. How can programming and adaptation of the historic buildings on the site be used to strengthen the connection and support the town centre?
- Inviting outdoor spaces. Plan for attractive, urban outdoor spaces and easy access to the sea.
- The harbour as part of the city. The harbour is an attractive area, especially during the summer. Development of the harbour area requires a balanced approach in terms of scale and functions, so that the area can work as a supplement to the town centre rather than a competitor drawing life away.
- Pier as a connector between land and water. How can the pier be designed and programmed to allow for easier access to the sea?
- New parking solutions. The project will potentially remove a lot of surface parking. Are there ways to help compensate?
- Larvik needs a new library. Could the site work as a host for the new library or would another type of public or commercial programme be better suited and more strategic for the site?
  - ◆ It is important to use public investments such as the new library to contribute to a compact and lively town centre. There is a fear that new buildings in the harbour would attract activity away from the city centre as opposed to enlivening it. Because of this, the municipality does not want the library down by the harbour.
  - ◆ The role of the library is rapidly changing. What would Larvik's future library look like?





*Just one city block away from the centre of Larvik is Bøkeskogen. As a nature reserve of beech trees, it is fundamental to the identity of Larvik. Photo: Larvik Kommune*

## COMMISSION FOR THE WINNER

Larvik will invite the winning team for a workshop on site in the spring 2024, the budget for the workshop (including fees, travel costs and other materials) is approximately 100 000 NOK.

Based on the results of the workshop, Larvik and the winning team will negotiate a timeline and follow up commission valued at approximately 1 000. 000 NOK (ex VAT) in 2024/25 for developing the project further through involving users, giving feedback to the zoning plan and revising designs.

The winning team might get the opportunity to collaborate with a local partner office contracted by the municipality.



# THE FUTURE VISIONS OF THE PEOPLE

The municipality of Larvik is investing heavily in co-creation and participation in order to develop the city in collaboration with inhabitants and to extend democratic processes in ways that are more inclusive to the public. To form a basis for developing this key area of the city, the municipality established a citizens' panel with 30 randomly selected participants to represent the general demographic of Larvik. This panel entered a 4 month long process of facilitated meetings where they were introduced to key concepts and aspects of city planning. In addition, the group shared and discussed their ideas for improving the city. After 5 gatherings of sharing, learning, meeting experts and discussing, the citizens' panel of Larvik agreed on a set of future visions for the area, which they now share with the E17 competitors:



## 1. Accessibility and connection

- We have a green, well-lit and safe area easily accessible for everyone, filled with life and people day and night all year round, in the summer heat and winter cold.
- We have a city that is universally accessible, and easy to use for everyone, even if mobility, sight or hearing is reduced.
- We have an area that is well connected across the different levels, and where it's possible to start your walk in the town both at the harbour and at the square, because both places are easily accessible with bikes, electric bikes, car and public transit.
- We have an area where it's easy to move all the way from the town square to the harbour both by foot and bike, and where there is a separation between bike lanes and sidewalks.
- We have an open and approachable harbour with good access, so it's tempting and easy to stop there.

## 2. Nature in the city

- We have green spaces that make it possible to find peace, do active and social activities alone or together. They are accessible to everyone and can be experienced with all senses independent of ability.
- We have an area marked by nature that makes it feel large, full of content and sets the bar for the future development of adjacent areas.
- We have an area with sea and springs that are calming and attract rich biodiversity. It can be used both summer and winter for activities and recreation. For example ice skating.

## 3. Inclusive and social

- We have a harbour area with spaces to meet, restaurants, green sanctuaries and bathing facilities so that citizens, visitors and tourists want to stay and use the area all year round.
- We have an area that works for concerts and events.
- We have an area that can be used for both social, cultural and learning activities accessible to all.
- We have an area with nice and attractive places to meet, facilities inside and outside where people can meet regardless of age and without having to pay.

## 4. The Library

- We have a building that can fulfill the needs for all groups, people and generations in Larvik.
- We have a library for the future, which is inviting and built on Larvik's identity and history.

## 5. Historic and future oriented

- Bøkkerfjellet has a unique, open view of the sea that underscores the history and traditions of Larvik as a coastal town.
- We maintain the existing listed buildings in a way that shows the history and vernacular architecture, utilising the resource that these buildings are.
- The area makes use of local qualities and resources, and is experienced as attractive for inhabitants, visitors and tourists.



## THE LIBRARY

Part of the task is evaluating if the site, and the connection to be made between the harbour and the upper part of town can incorporate a new library. But what is a library these days? The head librarian of Larvik municipality shares with us her thoughts on what the library of the future can look like in this town.

The library of the future is a place to meet people. A cultural institution that makes events, an arena for debate and public discourse that expands and develops democracy, as well as an arena of learning that shares and spreads knowledge. It is a place where people can be uncommitted visitors, or active participants.

We experienced that the former library building from the 1980s did not have the qualities needed to run a modern library. The accessibility was inadequate as it was removed from the centre or other functions that attract people. The building was static, inflexible and difficult to adapt to events, activities and other emerging needs.

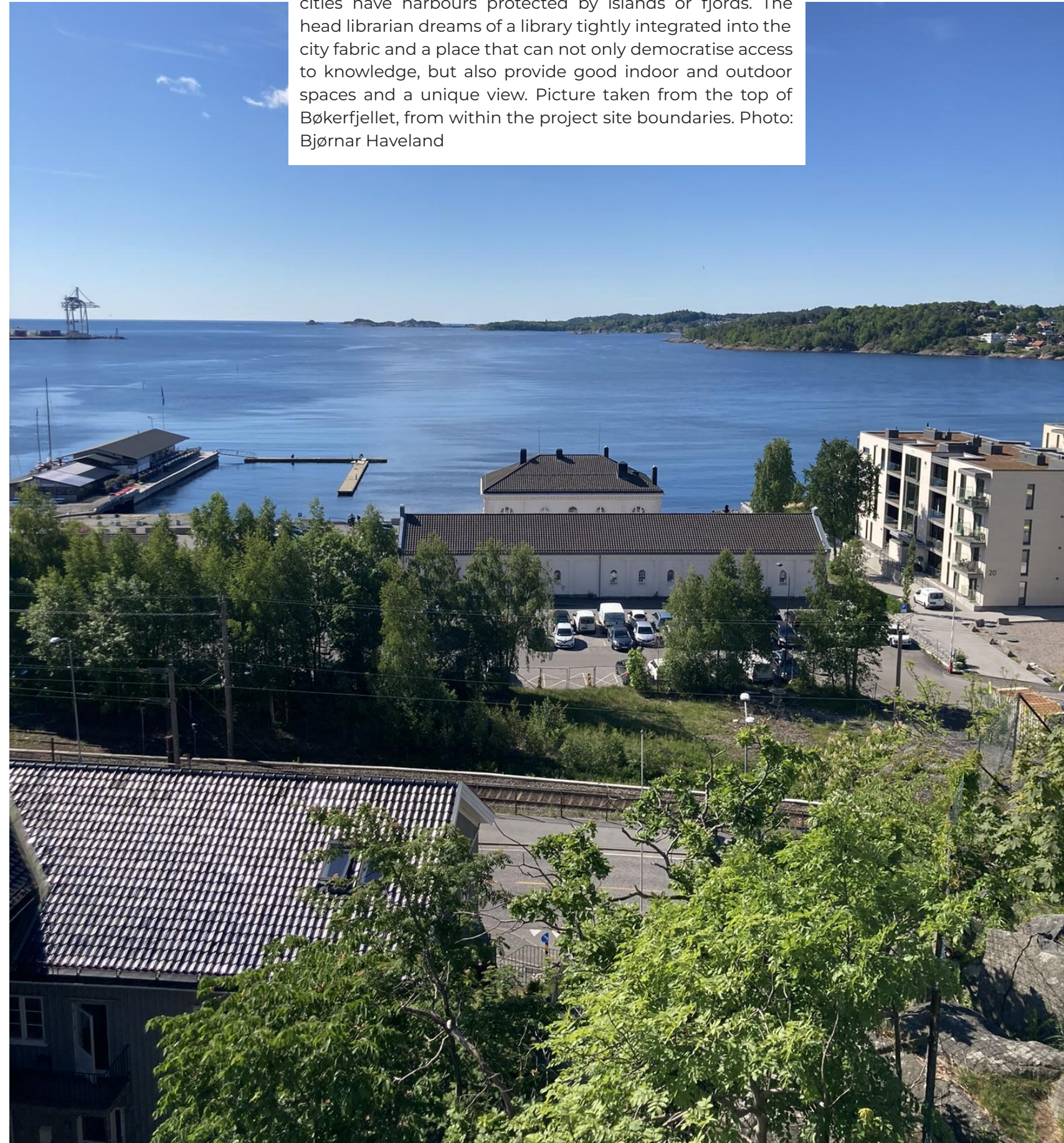
The Library is prioritised in the urban development programme of the town, and it has been decided that it should be located within the 5-minute town (within 5 minutes of walking from the central square). Accessibility is the number one priority for the library. It should be an arena of inclusivity, and must therefore have an easily discernible and accessible entrance in addition to providing all the services the inhabitants expect. The building must reflect the identity of the city. Historically, there has been a clear distinction between the labour class and upper class in Larvik. And it's important that the Library is universally accepted and recognised as a legitimate arena, and that large portions of the population feel ownership for it. We want the library to be a place that facilitates informal meetings for these groups and adapts it so that it can contribute to combat inequality and promote good public health.

The Library could be the connection in the middle that brings both inhabitants and tourists to the centre summer *and* winter.

Larvik's library aims to be a place for sharing. Sharing of knowledge, opportunities, participation and transfer of experience through conversation and activities. It must be big enough to host large events, classrooms, an activity room, a place to eat, group rooms and study spaces in addition to the more traditional functions. Today we have about 1600 square metres, but lack several of these functions. The library should be a meeting place that invites involvement of the inhabitants and civil society. It should be a safe and comfortable public space, and an open arena supporting an idea of community.

The view of the horizon from the city centre is unique, and should be available to everyone.

Larvik is one of only two towns in Norway with an uninterrupted view of the sea and horizon. Most towns and cities have harbours protected by islands or fjords. The head librarian dreams of a library tightly integrated into the city fabric and a place that can not only democratise access to knowledge, but also provide good indoor and outdoor spaces and a unique view. Picture taken from the top of Bøkerfjellet, from within the project site boundaries. Photo: Bjørnar Haveland

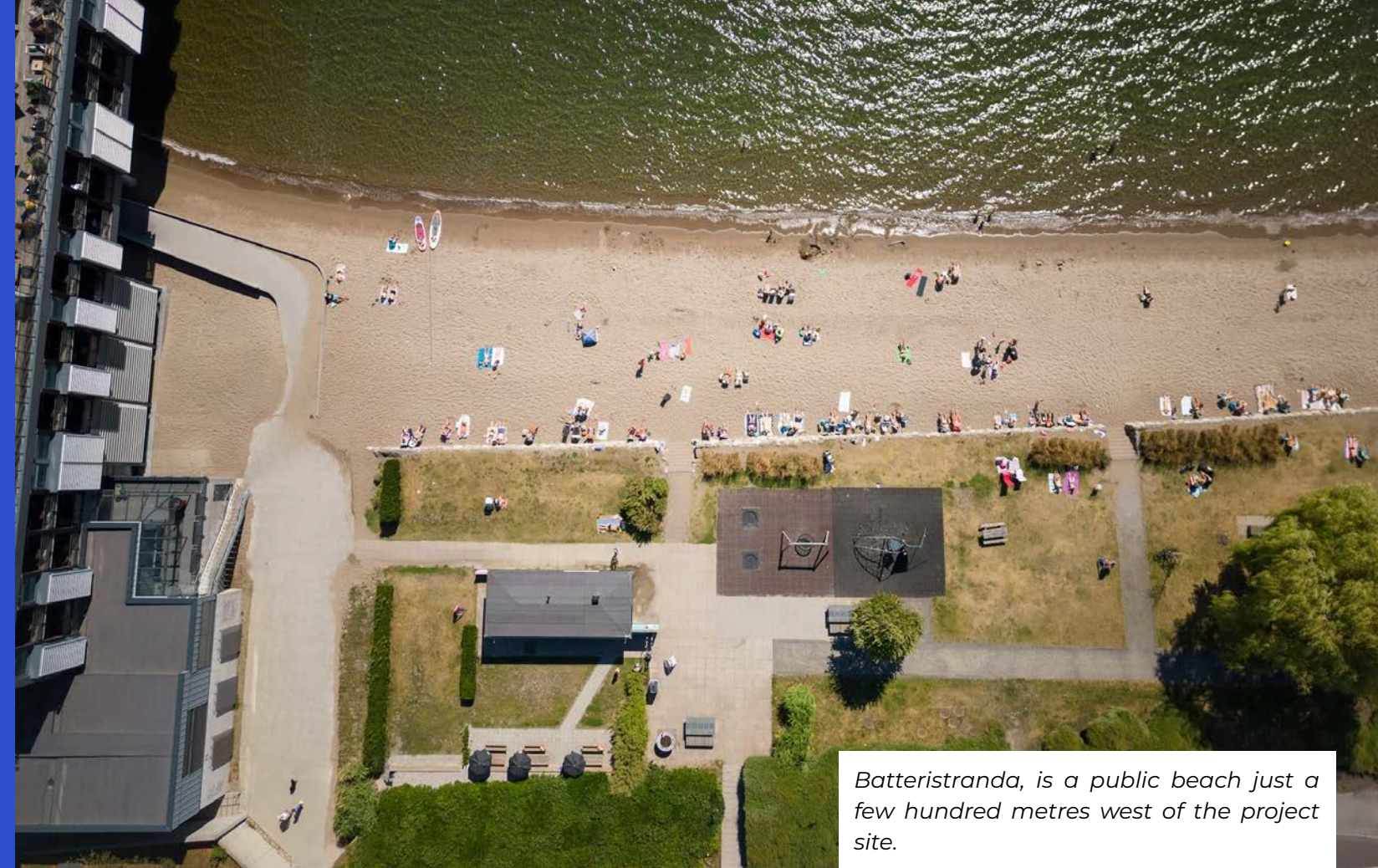




# 01

## Site context

- Welcome to Larvik
- Larvik in a regional context
- The Inter City railway
- Town centre strategy for Larvik
- A city shaped by water and geology
- Climate
- Larvikite - the blue heart of Larvik
- Historical heritage



*Batteristranda, is a public beach just a few hundred metres west of the project site.*

### Welcome to Larvik

Larvik's roots trace back to its seafront, and grew as a commercial centre for timber and iron ore.. The intense industrial and commercial demand for seafront land, means that Larvik's active centre moved from the harbour to a higher elevation closer to the main road, which formerly functioned as regions main road, E18. The main road passed over the town square at 32 metres above sea level creating a distance between the upper and lower parts of town. Since 1880, the railway, county road and ferry quay have all encroached on the land area of the beach.

The ferry quay moved in 2008 and several architectural competitions were held since then. Over the years, private actors have also provided input to the debate and offered proposals for the area. Little has been permanently established, but several temporary measures in the inner harbour have been implemented to activate the old ferry quay. Cars are still a main feature in the area around Tollboden, where a large car park dominates the landscape.

The connection between the seafront in Larvik and the city centre at Torget is still poor. The height difference acts as a barrier, even if the distance is short as the crow flies. Both the railway tracks and Storgata help reinforce the sense of disconnection. The City Centre Strategy has defined a need to establish a City Promenade that stretches from Tollboden via elevator to Bøkkerfjellet, north towards the square and further up to Bøkeskogen.

The concrete deck above the old fishing harbour is in poor shape and parts of the ferry deck as well as the pier (Vestre Brygge)has therefore been partially or completely blocked off. Larvik municipality had a choice to renovate the old concrete structure and secure the current wharf deck or demolish it and open up the old fishing harbour. The municipality has chosen to follow up with the latter option in this project.



## Larvik in a regional context

Larvik is centrally located in the most populous part of Vestfold and Telemark counties. The towns in the county constitute a continuous network of urban nodes, from Horten and Tønsberg in the north, via Sandefjord, Larvik and Porsgrunn, to Skien in the south. Tønsberg is the administrative centre of Vestfold, whereas Skien is the administrative centre of Telemark.

Larvik is situated right in the middle of these two administrative county centres. As the geographical midpoint in this network of towns, Larvik is aiming to strengthen its position and take on a bigger role as a regional hub. This includes attracting both public and private businesses that serve the Vestfold and Telemark region, functioning as a preferred meeting point for conferences and events as well as attracting new residents that will benefit from Larvik's central location in the interconnected Vestfold-Telemark housing and labour market.



### Towns as neighbourhoods in a shared territory

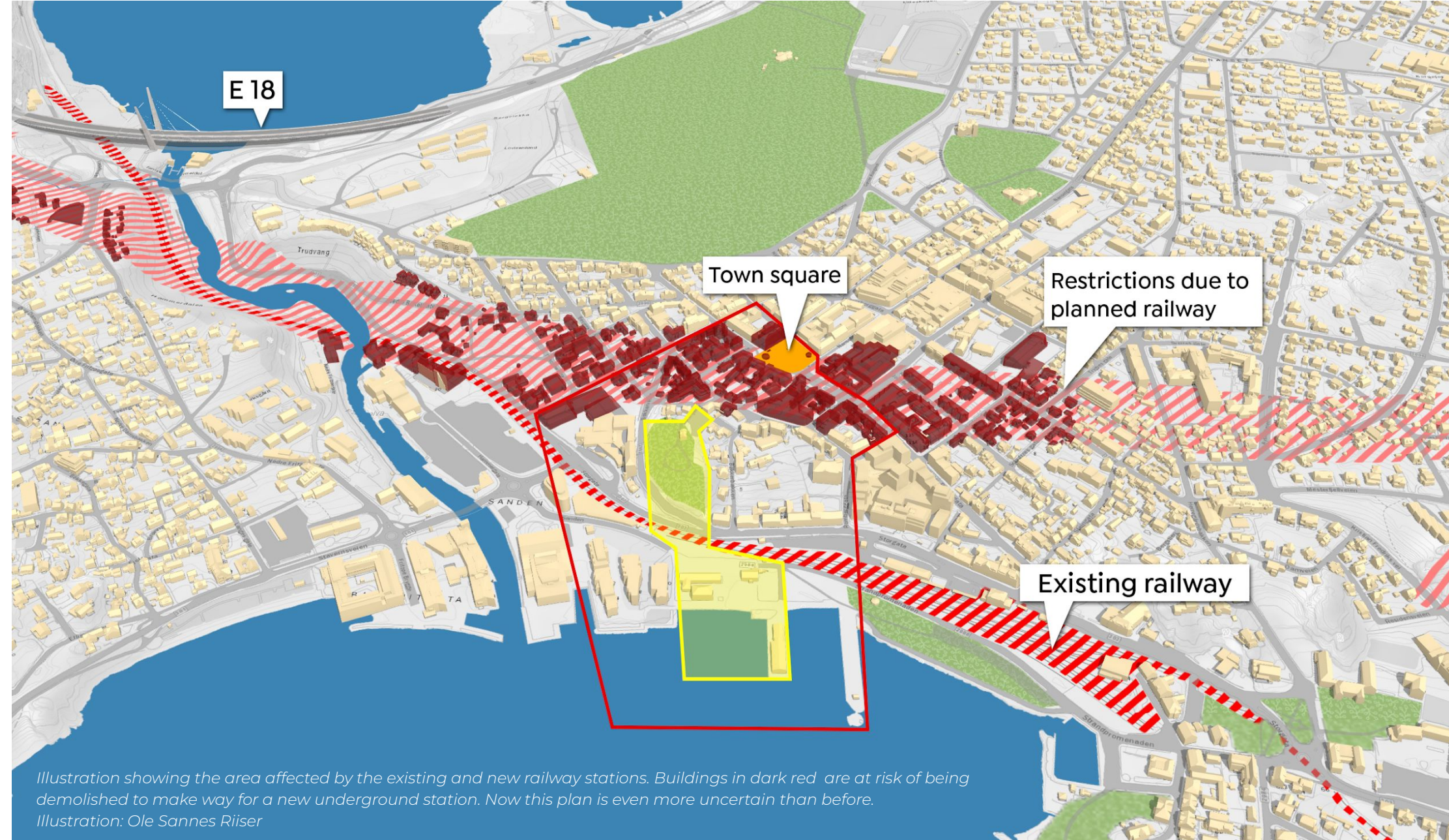
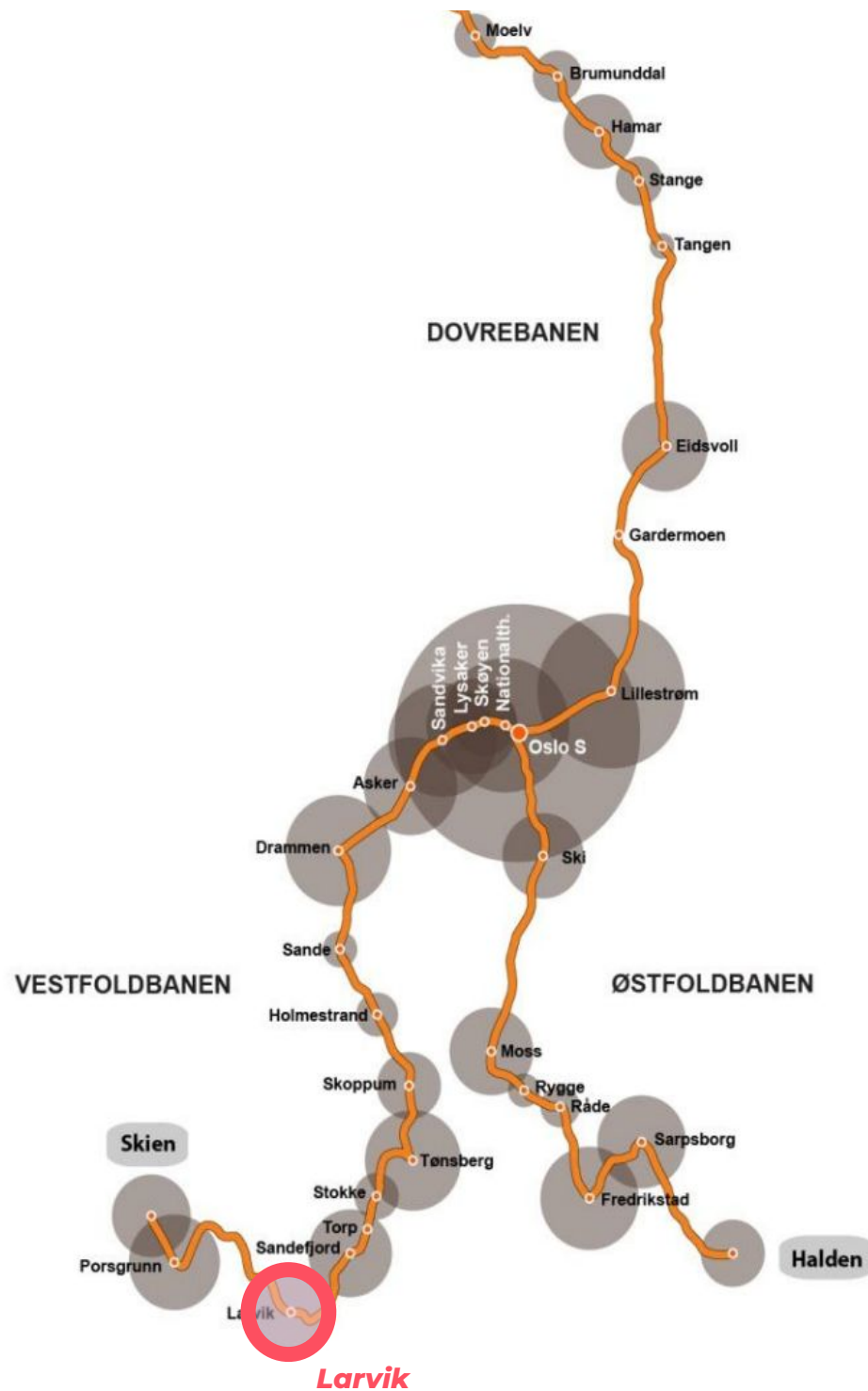
Due to the short distances between the towns in the region, people in Vestfold and Telemark often visit neighbouring towns for errands and cultural activities instead of or in addition to, their hometown. The towns share many of the same functions and offerings, but are also distinctive from one another in terms of commercial and cultural offerings along with geographical qualities. It is almost as if the towns were boroughs in the minds of the region's inhabitants, rather than isolated towns in their own right.





## Inter City railroad

The Inter City rail network connects Larvik and the other cities in the Vestfold and Telemark region with Drammen and Oslo. As a result, the railway holds an important position in connecting the residents of these small towns to the capital region, allowing the Vestfold and Telemark region to function as an interconnected housing and labour market.



## Waiting for Godot:

In 2012, the government started planning a new double track railway between Oslo and the cities of Vestfold, in order to increase the number of trains and commuter train traffic. In Larvik, this plan requires moving the railway and station away from the seafront and closer to the town centre.

As a result of these plans, substantial areas of the urban centre have regulatory restrictions and cannot be developed until the track building is complete. Due to budget overruns on other railway projects and the ongoing global economic situation, the Inter City development project has been put on hold indefinitely.

This is very challenging for Larvik, due to all the areas in the urban centre that are still under strict regulations because of the above mentioned plans.

This means Larvik has to focus on development projects that are not constrained by, or dependent on, the new Inter City railway.

The unresolved situation regarding future plans for a new railway and the fact that an extensive area of the town centre is under regulatory restrictions, has led to a lack of investments and development in the town centre over the last decade. With a few notable exceptions, most development projects have been localised either outside the town centre, or on its outskirts. This situation underlines the need to focus on centrally located development projects that are independent of the on-hold railway plans and that can help revitalise the city centre.





Residential streets with free parking

Central retail/commercial district

Main bus terminal/stop

Temporary library

Shopping mall

Main square

Municipal administration

Farris factory

Bøkkerfjellet park

Culture house/cinema

Spa hotel

Public beach

Railway station

Park and sport fields



## Town centre strategy of Larvik

The primary purpose of the town centre strategy for Larvik is to increase the level of activity in the town's urban centre. The centre of Larvik may come across as sleepy and with a low level of activity because typical urban functions are thinly spread across a broad area.

The town centre strategy is made up of three main principles of urban development that can contribute to a more compact town centre with a higher level of activity.

### Principle 1

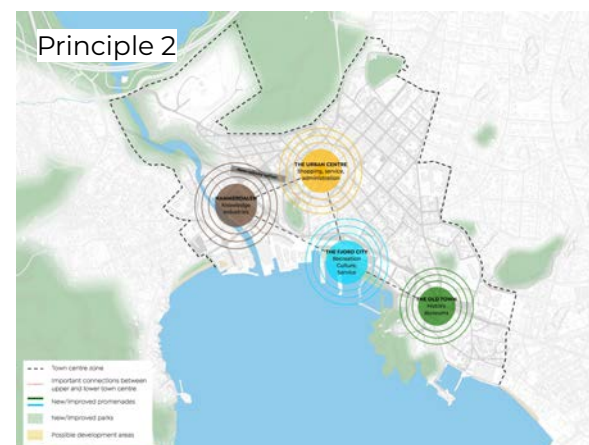
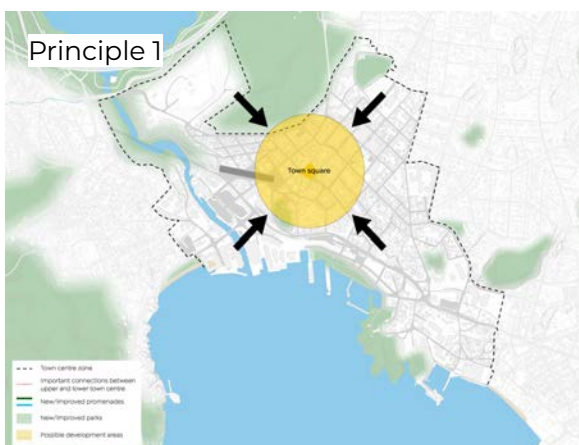
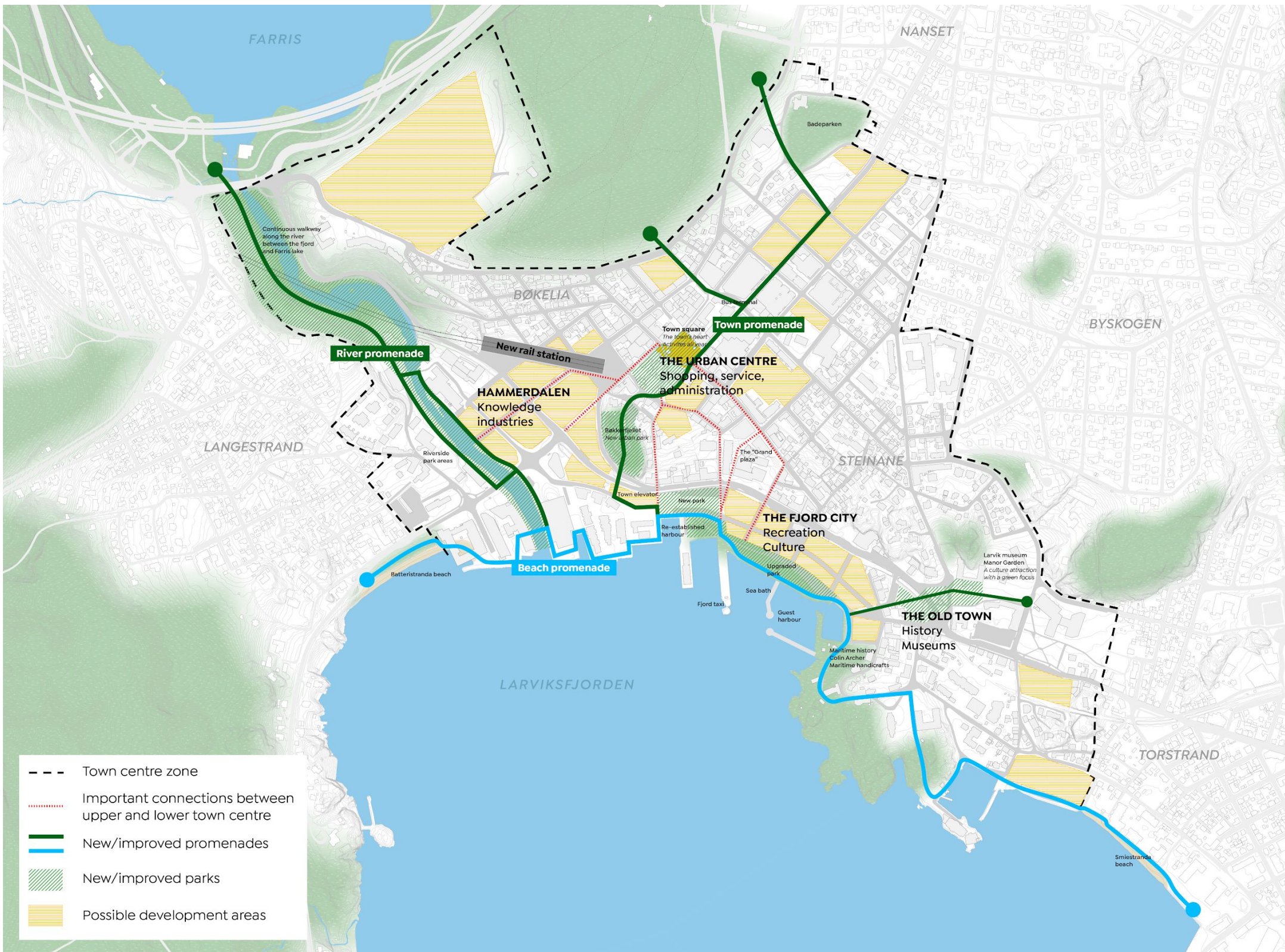
Revolves around concentrating the urban functions in a more compact urban core: both public and administrative functions as well as commercial ones. This can contribute to reducing travel distances and increasing the level of activity, creating a more attractive and sustainable foundation for new investments.

### Principle 2

Implies cultivating the unique characteristics between different parts of the city centre, creating quarters and districts that complement and reinforce each other, rather than competing.

### Principle 3

Involves establishing better physical connections for green mobility: trails, walkways, bicycle paths etc. within the urban centre, encouraging movement by light modes of transport and reducing perceived distances.





## Bøkeskogen

*Bøkeskogen, the beech forest, is the source of the Farris brand of natural mineral water. Larvik is the only town in Norway with a large beech forest. The rainwater collected in the forest filters through the moraine deposits that make up the ground of Larvik. The process takes about 30 years before the water erupts in the spring below the city.*

*The beech forest is an important identity marker for Larvik, and functions as a major recreational park and nature reservation. It is often described as "sitting on top of Larvik like a green hat".*

## Town centre development

*The fate of Larvik's town centre is undecided. The new station will be located in the town centre, although this means a large portion of the centre will be demolished and even larger parts will be put on hold without being able to develop for at least another decade.*

*The construction of the new station means the old station that blocks the town from the harbour can be removed to free up space for new development. Due to recent budget cuts however, the plans for the new railroad are suspended, meaning that both plans for the harbour and the city centre remain in limbo.*

## A busy intersection and development potential

All traffic going to the settlements west of Larvik goes through this busy intersection. It is also the access point for trucks going in and out of the Farris factory and its parking lots. The intersection is also prone to flooding due to its proximity to the estuary. All this makes for a rather messy situation.

In the future, the parking for the Farris factory will be made available for more industrial and knowledge-based production.

## Farris Bad and beach

*Larvik has a long history of luxurious bath houses because of its mineral-rich spring water and strong presence of royal and upper class family dynasties. Today the Farris Bad, a large hotel and spa, continues this tradition in a new building on the beach.*

*Farris bad has a wide range of pools, saunas and spas available to paying customers, but the beach is public and accessible to everyone.*

## Project site

The project site for Larvik's E17 participation deals with one of the most central ambitions of the town centre plan: how to transcend the steep hill between the city centre and the harbour? Furthermore this connection can be built even if the fate of the new train line is not yet decided, as the connection will have to traverse the main road as well as the height differences.

## An improvised park

*A few years ago, the empty land between the railroad and the docks was transformed from empty space to an active park in a single day through rapid temporary interventions. This was carried out as a cooperation between civil society and the municipality. Sand was brought in to make volleyball fields, temporary furniture was built and events were held. The temporary measures remained and the area is now designated for permanent upgrades in the town strategy.*





## A town shaped by geology and water

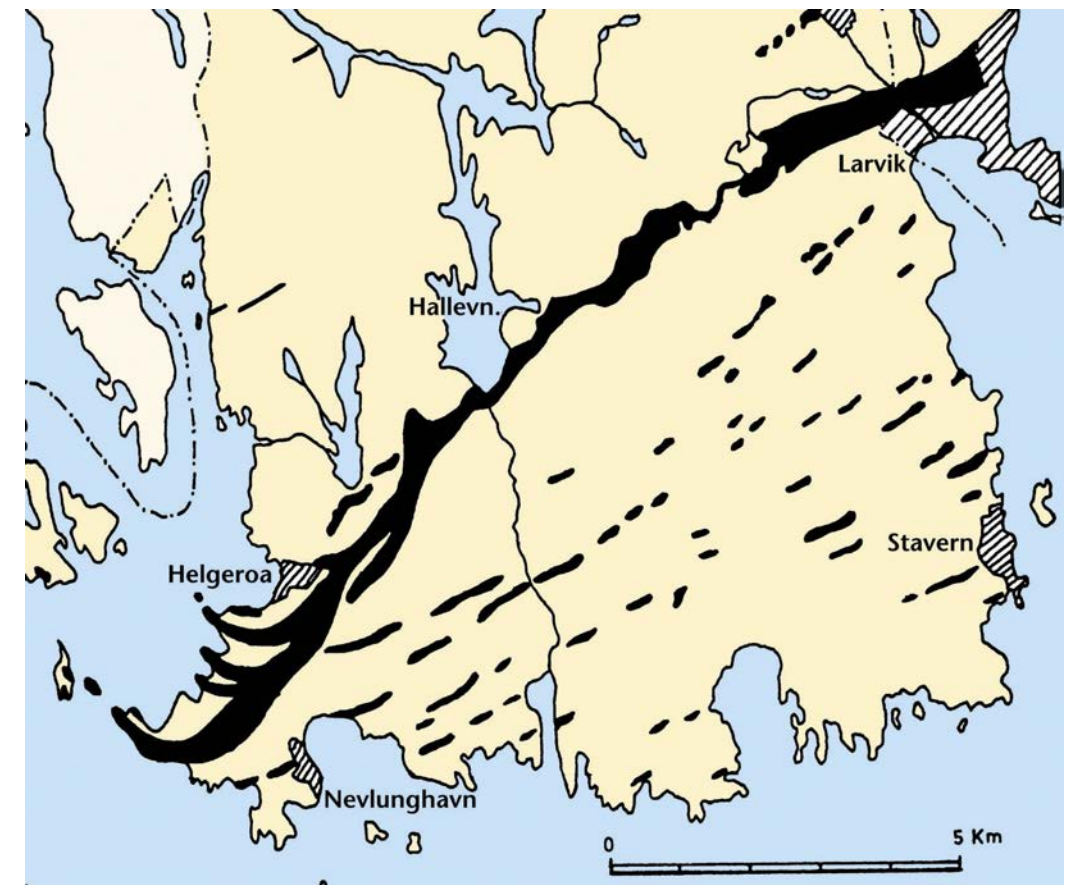
The landscape we see in Larvik today has been shaped through the last ice age. The bedrock itself, consisting of a rock called larvikite, was formed about 300 million years ago due to volcanic activity in the area. During the last ice age, all of Norway including Larvik was buried beneath a 2000-3000 metre thick ice sheet. During this period, the ice acted like a kind of sandpaper on the landscape, its movement scouring and carving away at the tough bedrock to form the characteristic smoothed-out landscape we find in Larvik today. Relatively flat fertile lands and smooth outcrops called "svaberg" along the coastline and a more hilly landscape further inland all stem from this geological phenomenon.

A marked ridge formation stretches through Larvik in an east-west direction. This ridge is called "Raet" and is a glacial moraine that was formed as the withdrawal of the ice sheet came to a stop around 11 000-12 000 years ago. As the ice halted, it deposited substantial amounts of sand, silt, clay and blocks, forming a ridge along its perimeter. This ridge is still a very visible element in today's Larvik and without it, Farris Lake would instead be a fjord filled with sea water. South of Raet, along the coast, the landscape is smooth and cultivated, whereas the landscape to the north is more rugged and forested.

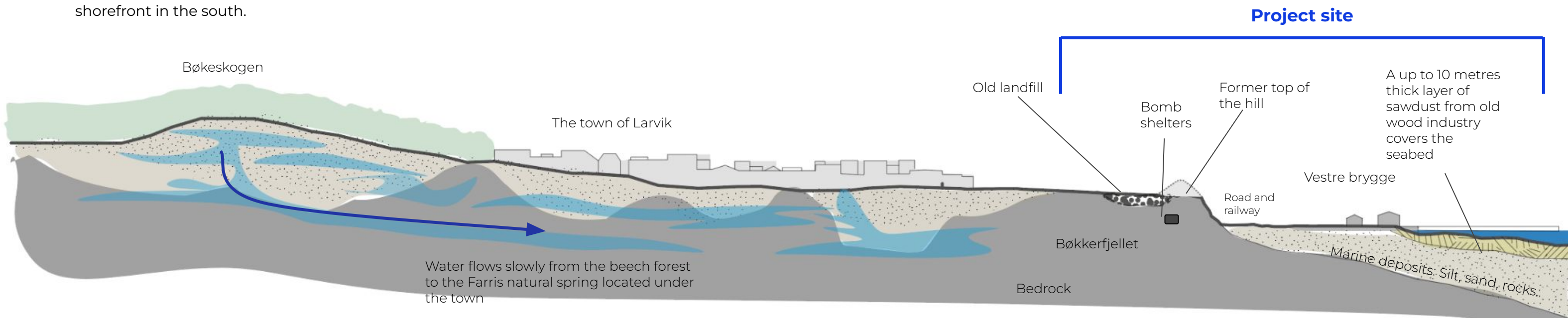
Squeezed between Farris Lake to the north and the Larvik fjord to the south lies the town of Larvik, situated along the slope of Raet. The city centre stretches from the beech tree forest atop the ridge down to the shorefront in the south.

On top of the Raet moraine, directly north of the town centre, lies the beech forest "Bøkeskogen". This sublime patch of green overlooking Larvik is Norway's largest and the world's most northerly beech tree forest. It is crisscrossed with walking trails, from 2.6 to 10 kilometres in length. The forest provides stunning views over Farris Lake from its northwestern apex and beautiful views of the sea from its southern edges. This unique, large beech forest provides the town's inhabitants with a very accessible natural environment where it is possible to feel far from town life.

Due to the silt and clay in the Raet moraine that both the beech forest and the town rests upon, the mass of moraine acts as an excellent filtering medium for water. It additionally imbues the water passing through it with a rich cocktail of healthy minerals. Due to the presence of this high quality mineral water, Larvik is home to the most recognised brand of mineral water in Norway, suitably named "Farris" after the adjacent lake. The Farris brewery and water bottling facility is situated centrally in Larvik. For the same reason, Larvik has a century-old history with bath houses and spas, continuing to this day with the renowned spa hotel "Farris Bad" situated on the Batteristranda beach in the city centre.



"Raet" is a glacial moraine that was formed as the withdrawal of the ice sheet came to a stop around 11 000-12 000 years ago. The illustration shows how it passes through the region. Map: Østfoldposten



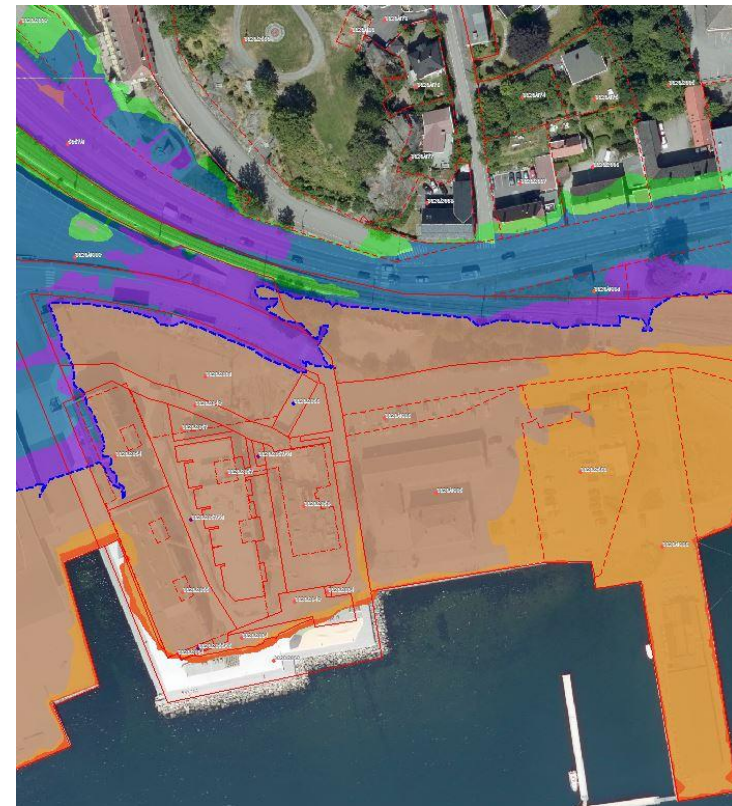


## Climate

Although Larvik is characterised by a sunny and stable climate during the summer months, the immediate proximity to the ocean exposes the town to winds coming in from the sea. In Larvik, the prevailing winds are northerly during the winter and southerly or southwesterly during the summer. Southerly winds are coming in directly from the sea due to the open character of the fjord, making the project area also very exposed to these winds.

The lower parts of the project area lie almost at sea level, making it at risk of flooding during storm surges and rising sea levels. In addition, the open character of the Larvik fjord means the area is exposed to ocean swell and waves coming in from the sea. This makes the area less suitable as a harbour for leisure crafts, as this would require establishing seawalls or a jetty, which is challenging owing to the depth of water there.

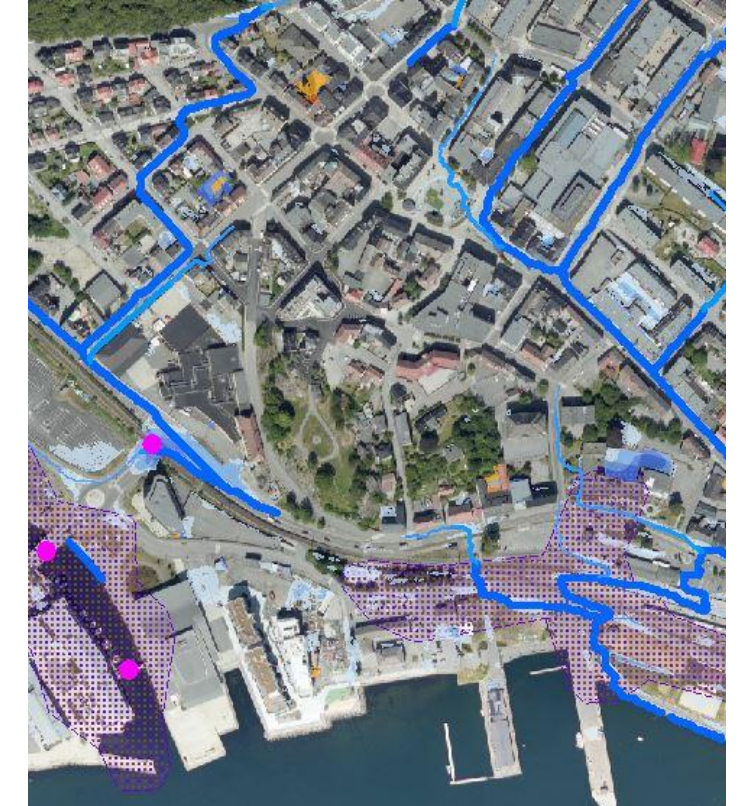
The seabed in the inner parts of the Larvik fjord consist of layers of sawdust deriving from former industrial activity in the area, sitting on top of unstable marine clay. This means establishing permanent constructions like sea walls or jetties will also be technically demanding and costly.



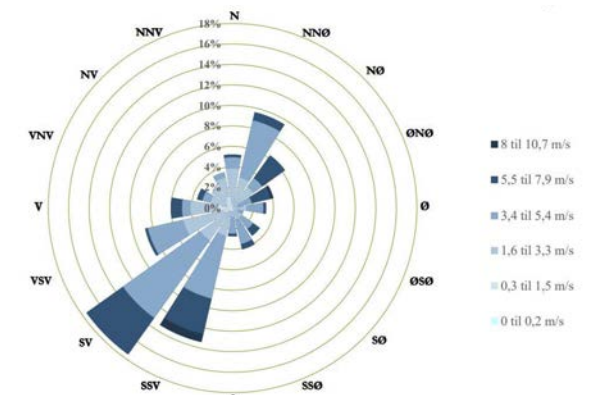
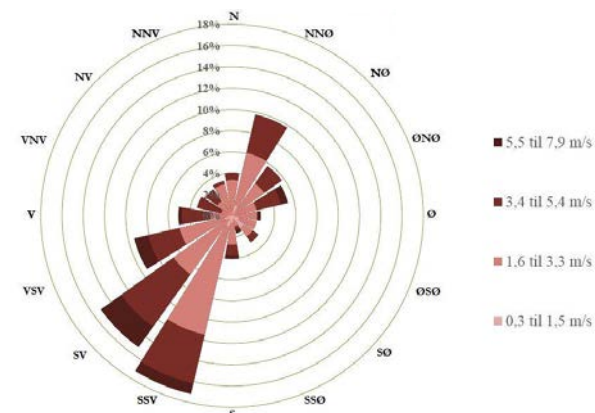
**Spring tide flooding** is predominant in the seabed of Larvik fjord.



**A noise level** map showing how the project area is exposed to noise from nearby infrastructure.



The blue lines indicate **flood routes** during extreme precipitation. The dotted fill indicates areas at risk of flooding during storm surges.



Significant parts of the project area are also exposed to noise from the public infrastructure crossing the area - the highly trafficked road "Storgata" and the railway both follow parallel paths through the area. The yellow and red colours indicate the average noise levels in different areas, measured over a 24 hour period. Red zones are exposed to average noise levels of 65 decibels or more and yellow areas are exposed to noise levels between 55 and 65 decibels.

**Wind roses** show the prevailing winds in Larvik in summer (above) and winter (below). Main wind direction is quite similar in summer and winter, although there is a big difference in how it is experienced.

Bøkkerfjellet forest is one of the few green lungs in the centre of Larvik, and as such, it is important to maintain the green and natural qualities of the park. The European project should strive to maintain a good balance between the built environment and natural surroundings and strengthen the green qualities of the whole project area.



## Larvikitt -the blue black heart of Larvik

The stone industry is significant in Larvik. There are several quarries in the municipality, mainly run by two large companies. The presence of a unique type of rock called larvikite, named after the town itself, is the reason why the stone industry is significant in Larvik. The exclusivity of the larvikite, prized for its unique blue iridescence, makes it particularly attractive as an ornamental stone for use in facade cladding, countertops, indoor tiling for instance. Larvikite has been an export article from Larvik since 1884, and this export constitutes a significant amount of the total cargo volumes handled and shipped from the port of Larvik, one of the biggest ports in Norway.

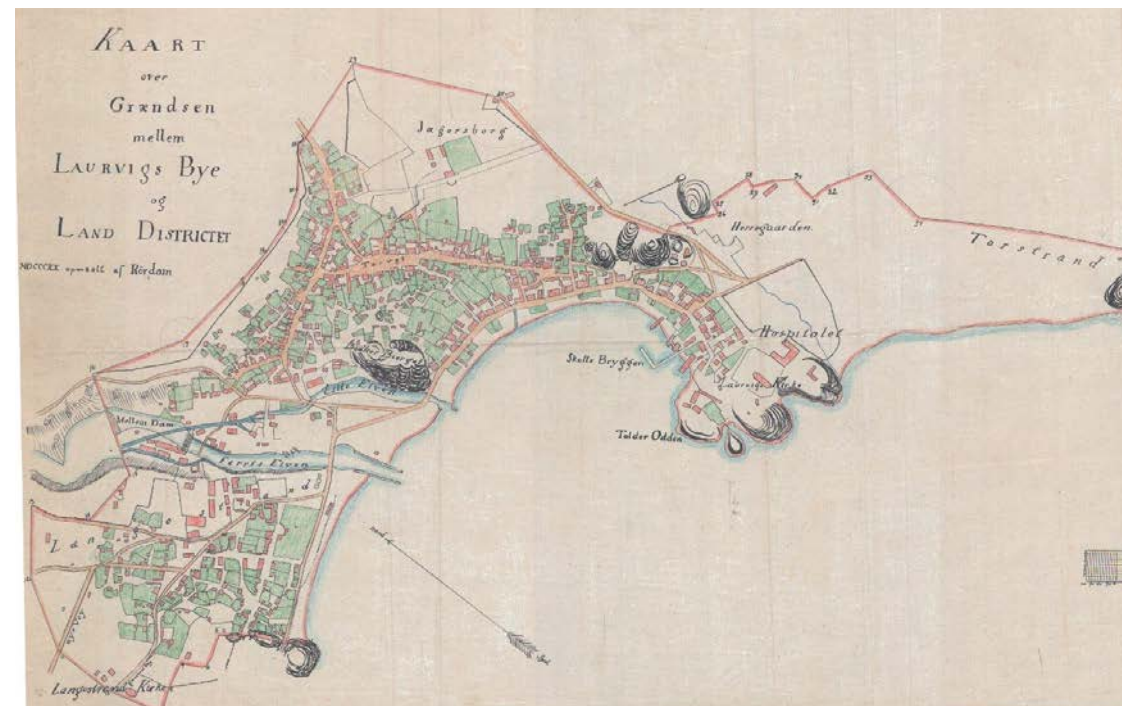
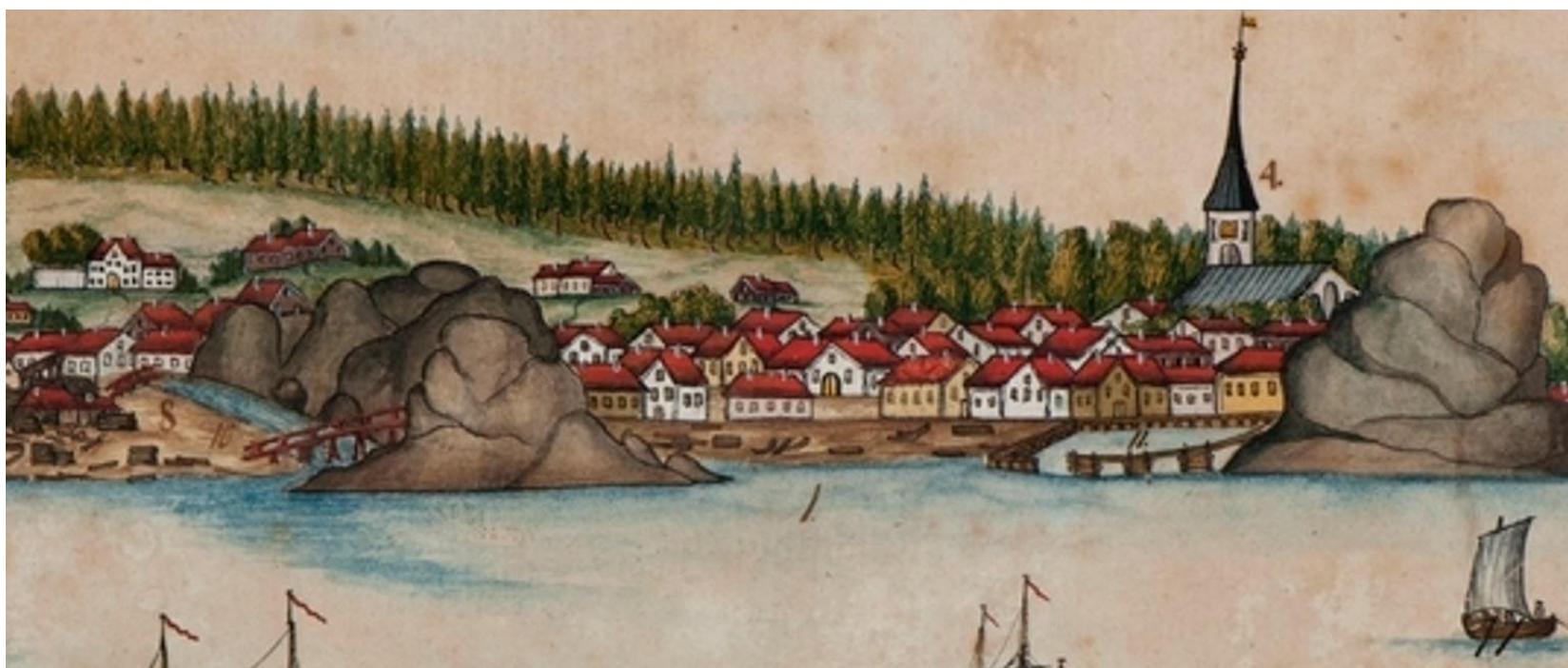
However, a significant portion of the extracted larvikite is of lesser quality in terms of ornamental use. The stone industry is striving to increase the level of utilization of the extracted rock, making for a more sustainable business model and a better climate footprint. Larvikite is a very hard and extremely durable rock that is highly resistant to erosion and weathering.

The industry has therefore in recent years found new uses for excess rock that isn't suitable for ornamental use, such as blocks for retaining walls, kerb stones, outdoor surface materials and coastal protection. The processing of excess rock into the aforementioned materials happens on site in the quarries, and is performed by smaller local companies which helps to increase value-creation at a local level. This also creates opportunities for construction projects to obtain necessary materials locally rather than transporting them from far away.

**Larvikite is a peculiar and unique monzonitic rock**, only present in Larvik and its immediate surroundings. The blue iridescence in the feldspar crystals makes the rock particularly attractive as ornamental stone, and since the start of industrial-scale production in 1884, the use of larvikite has reached every corner of the global community. With resources for hundreds of years, the region will produce larvikite blocks far into the future. The production of larvikite has changed significantly during the last decades, towards more sustainable production finding new applications and markets for excess rock in the quarries. The significance of larvikite in the global market has also created a wider appreciation for the rock in Norwegian society, acknowledging the rich history of larvikite production and use. Source: [The Geological Society](#)



*Larvik has a peculiar type of landscape, with large rocks suddenly protruding from the ground in seemingly random locations. These rock formations feature prominently in historical drawings and maps.*





## Historical heritage

Differences between rich and poor, between nobility, citizens and the working class, are part of the heritage of Larvik. Ever since Larvik became the centre of Denmark's rule over Norway and the Countship was established, awareness of this inequality has been very present. Although Larvik is today a low-income municipality with relatively noticeable living standard challenges, significant child poverty and a large proportion of people on disability benefits, the properties of some of Norway's richest families are very visible, lying in close proximity to the city.

Larvik has large natural resources, but a great deal of it is in private hands.

- Numedalslågen is the National Salmon Watercourse - one of the best salmon rivers in Norway, and is listed in the top 10 fishing spots in the country.
- Vegetable production requires high quality soil and a long growing season, and here Larvik and Vestfold are in a special position. Some of the best arable land in Norway is located in Larvik.
- The resources of the large forests have been central to Larvik ever since the town was founded. Timber exports and the wood industry are significant sectors of production.
- The stone industry is a source of pride and identity in Larvik.
- The Farriselva river, with its large volume of water flow and high terrain drop, has functioned as a power producer right up to the present day.
- Farrisvannet, a huge fresh water resource right next to the city centre, supplies not only Larvik, but several of the nearby towns with drinking water.

Larvik Havn, one of Norway's largest container ports, still remains in municipal ownership and forms an exception to the above list. The ferry connection to Denmark with Colorline is also located here. The nearest international airport, Sandefjord Torp, is only 20 kilometres from the centre of Larvik.



## Private Residence City

The creation of Larvik County is closely linked to the introduction of the monarchy in Denmark-Norway in 1660-1661. Brunla county, together with Larvik town, became the first contiguous territory that King Christian V elevated to the status of county. Larvik town was handed over to Count Ulrik Frederik Gyldenløve as part of the new county. It did not receive its own market town privileges though and became a private residence town. This was not common in either Denmark or Norway, but had parallels elsewhere in Northern Europe. Herregården, or The County Residence, was built by the governor and Gyldenløve in 1671. The estate lies a little to the east of what is Larvik centre today.

"The counties were the most exotic flowers of the new privileged society", writes historian Øystein Rian. The counties were meant to provide the new nobility with income and power for generations. Count Ulrik Frederik Gyldenløve's special rights are described as princely.

## Fritzøehus - modern day nobility

Fritzøehus is located in Fritzøehus park, a park of approximately 1700 hectares just to the west of Larvik centre. The property has been developed by the Treschow family, a noble family with longstanding ties to Larvik.

The total floor area is 2302 m<sup>2</sup> and contains 75 rooms and 21 basement rooms. The castle is Norway's largest privately owned residence. The cultural landscape is maintained with help from the flocks of fallow deer and mouflon, which roam freely throughout the park. The fallow deer were introduced from Denmark in 1921 and the mouflon, a wild sheep originally endemic to Corsica, were brought to the park in 1962.

With 734 000 acres of forest and open fields in his portfolio, Michael Stang Treschow is the country's largest private forest owner through the company Fritzøe Skoger.





**Laurvig Bad** was a favorite spa among leading writers as well as business and cultural elites at the turn of the century, between 1800 and 1900. The bathing room was located where the Farris building is today. Henrik Ibsen was one of the authors who wrote during his stays at Laurvig spa. Laurvig was an exclusive space for the elite, whereas further out in the Lilleelven a public bathhouse for the common people existed. Laurvig bad ceased to exist when the railway was laid right past the site. Today, Lilleelven runs in underground pipes and the bathing functions have moved from the competition site area.



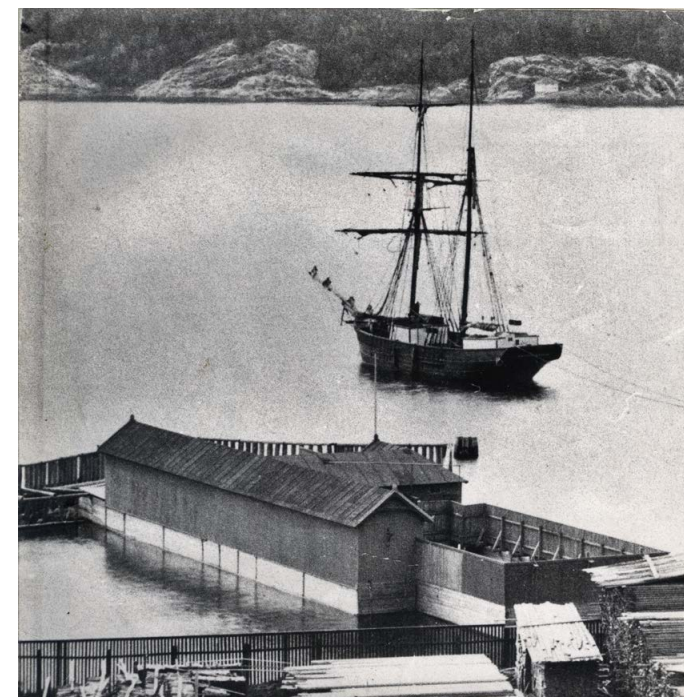
The historical map shows the location of the historical spa-bath between Lilleelva and Bøkkerfjellet. The public open sea bath is situated on the beach in front.



**Farris Bad** was established by the Treschow family in 2007, and is a continuation of Larvik as a host for spa tourism. Farris Bad is an exclusive spa facility, which is located 300 metres west of the competition site. The target group is brokered tourists and business travellers, but the hotel is also an arena and a knowledge centre for sauna culture in Norway and Scandinavia. Several sauna masters from Larvik and Farris Bad have been awarded prizes for their sauna rituals. The sauna environment at Farris bad has also been the initiator of the pop-up sauna Donasjonsbadstuen, which was a free service offer at Batteristranda and ran in the period 2015-2018.

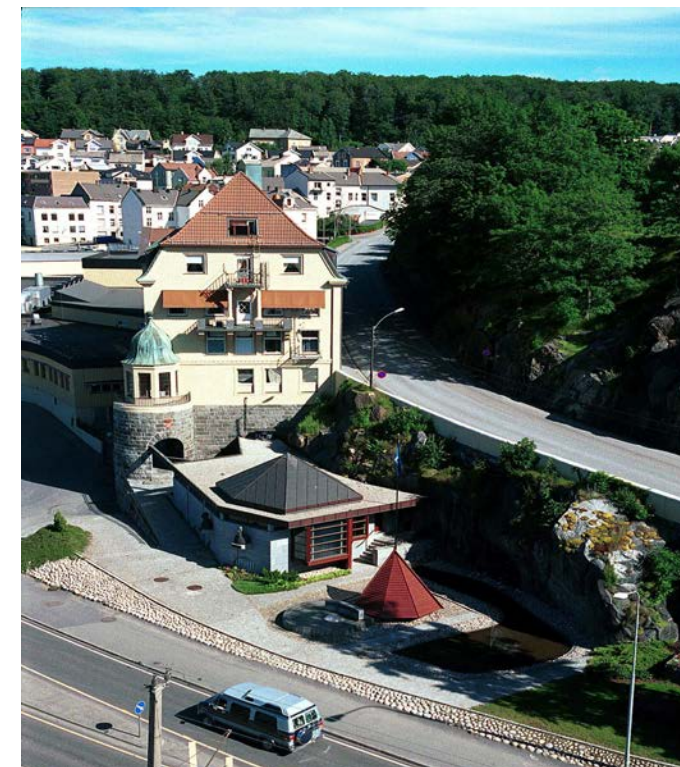
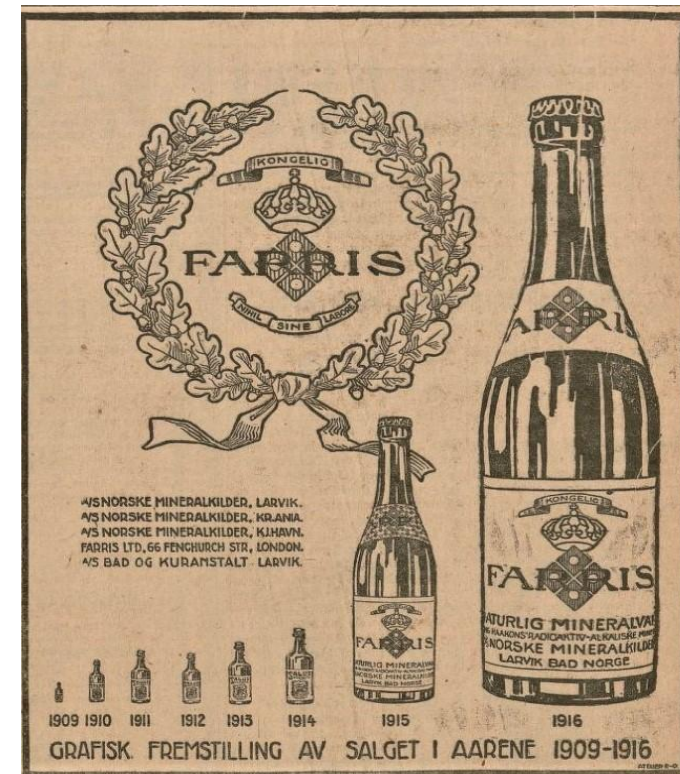


Photo of the rock cave from which Larvik Bad obtained the spring water for Farris' forerunner Salus - at the foot of Bøkkerfjellet



The public bath house at Sanden

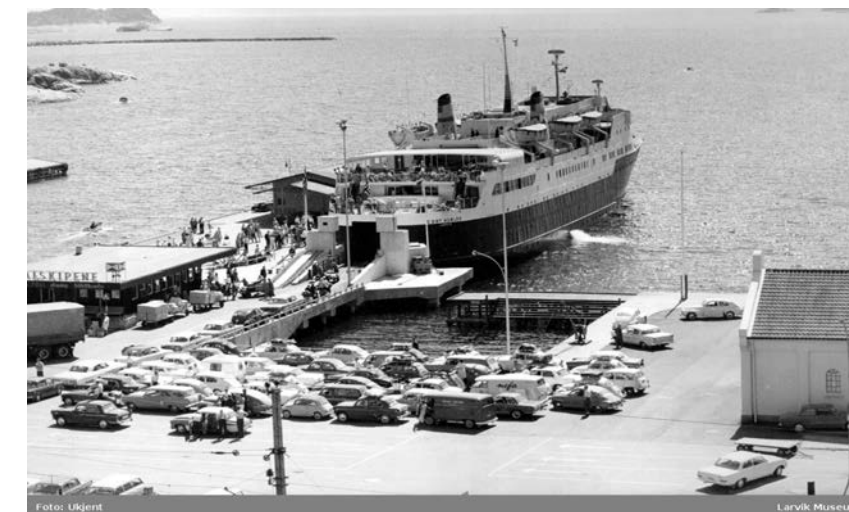
**Farris** spring has been used as a natural source of mineral water since 1843. In the beginning, Laurvig spa was established for medical purposes as the water was seen to have medicinal and healing properties. It was later turned into a business producing bottled mineral water. Today, Farris is the leading brand of mineral water in Norway.



The Farris administration building in front of the mineral-water factory and Bøkkerveien.



The harbour 1900



The harbour 1950





# 02

## Project site

- The project site
- Bøkerfjellet - a swiss cheese rock
- Barriers
- Indre Havn
- Reopening the harbour
- Important elements on the site





### The Bøkkerfjellet park

Bøkkerfjellet, a large cliff that abruptly pops up out of the landscape, is a former quarry. Today it is filled in, giving it a flat top that's currently used as a park with great views of the fjord and surrounding landscape. While some of these qualities should be preserved, there is still plenty of potential for projects to improve and incorporate this area in their plans.

### Festiviteten

Historic building, recently renovated and used as an event space and restaurant.

### Farris factory

### Tollboden

The old customs building is owned by the municipality. Today it is used by the Larvik Learning Centre, providing basic public education for refugees and newly arrived immigrants, focusing on courses in the Norwegian language, social studies and intercultural communication among other things. The centre, however, is planning to move, and there is no plan on what to use the buildings for after

### The triangle site

The entire site is owned by different public entities, But this small site leased by a private developer on a 200 year lease. The developer is interested in developing the site.

### “Bølgen” Culture house

The “Bølgen” culture house is the main cultural centre in Larvik and is an important arena for cultural events and conferences. It houses a cinema with three auditoriums, a concert hall/auditorium with 550 seats, a black box theatre, conference rooms, a bar and café, an art gallery, and office facilities for the culture house administration.

### Apartment complex

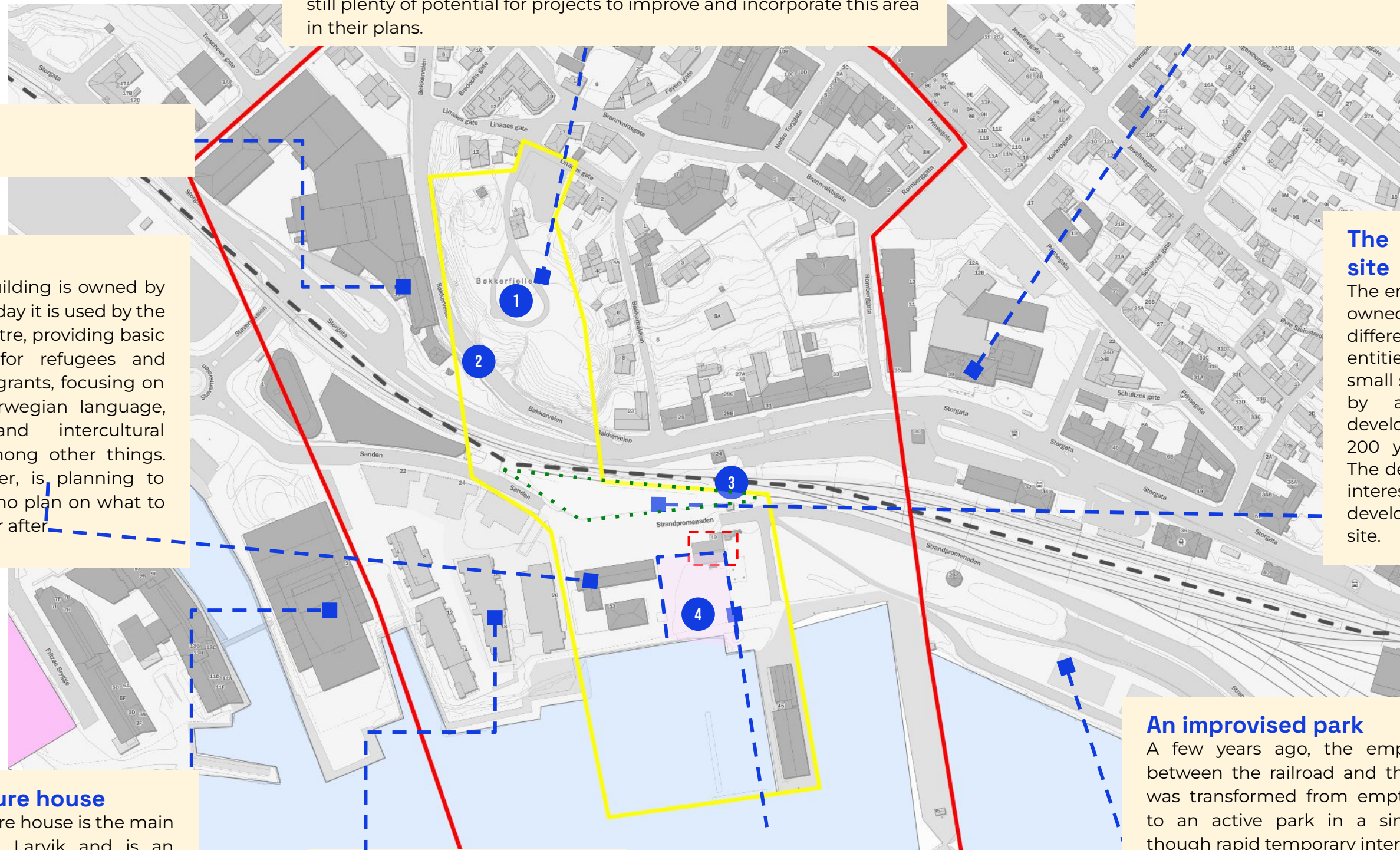
New apartment buildings. When the developer was allowed to build this, they signed a deal to help fund the connection that will link the harbour and town centre together.

### Harbour restoration

The pier and the concrete elements used to cover the historic harbour are falling apart. It has been decided to restore and reopen the fishing harbour in its original form, removing the restaurant building and the parking that is on the site today.

### An improvised park

A few years ago, the empty land between the railroad and the docks was transformed from empty space to an active park in a single day though rapid temporary interventions as cooperation between civil society and the municipality. Sand was brought in to make volleyball fields, temporary furniture built and events held. The temporary measures stayed, and the area is now designated for permanent upgrades in the town strategy.







Top of Bøkkerfjellet

1



The Road along Bøkkerfjellet and staircase leading up from the west. The Farris factory is to the left.

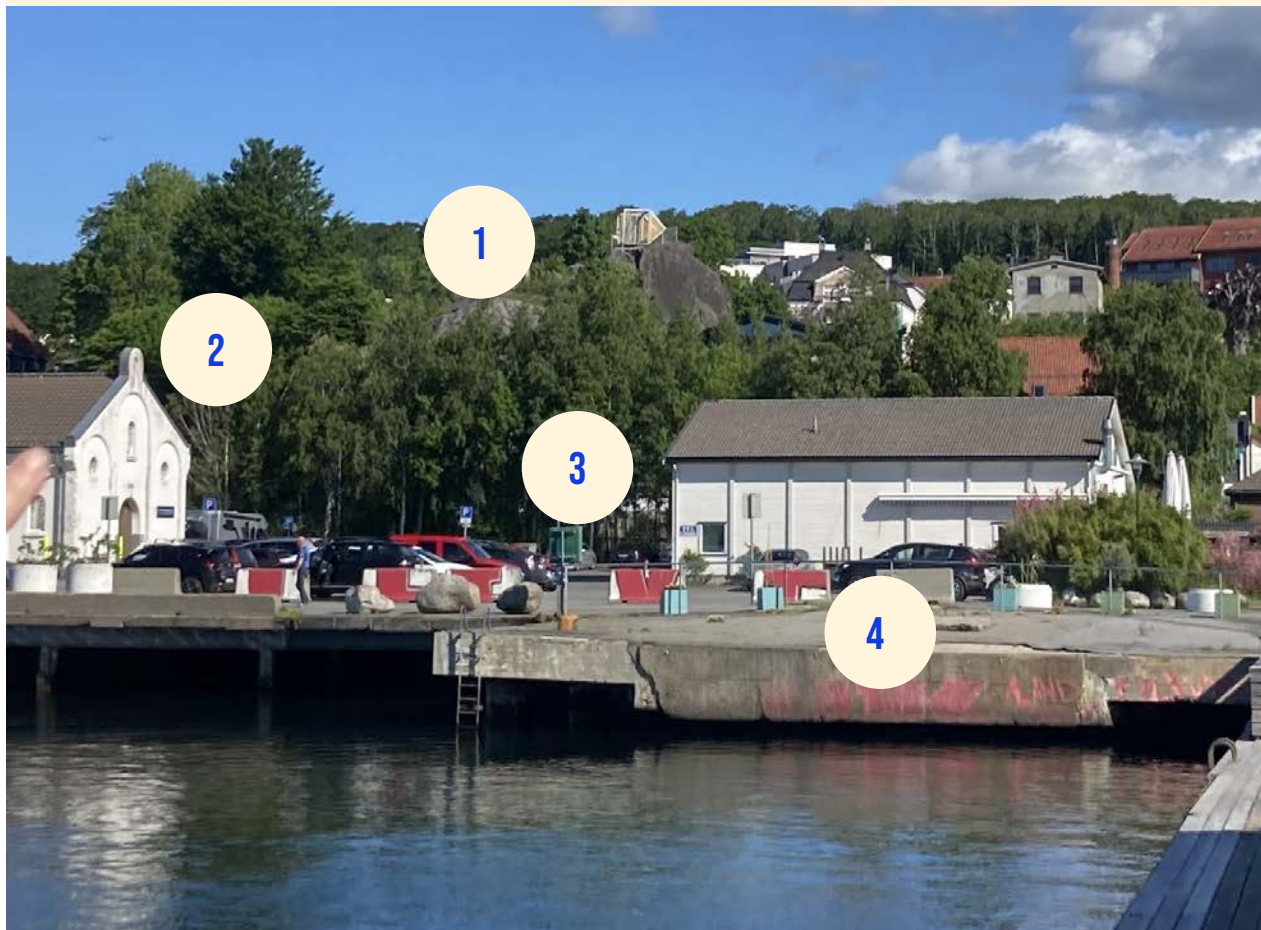
2



The railroad tracks take up vast amounts of space and feature a lot of fences and junk space creating a massive barrier.

3

The project site seen from the pier



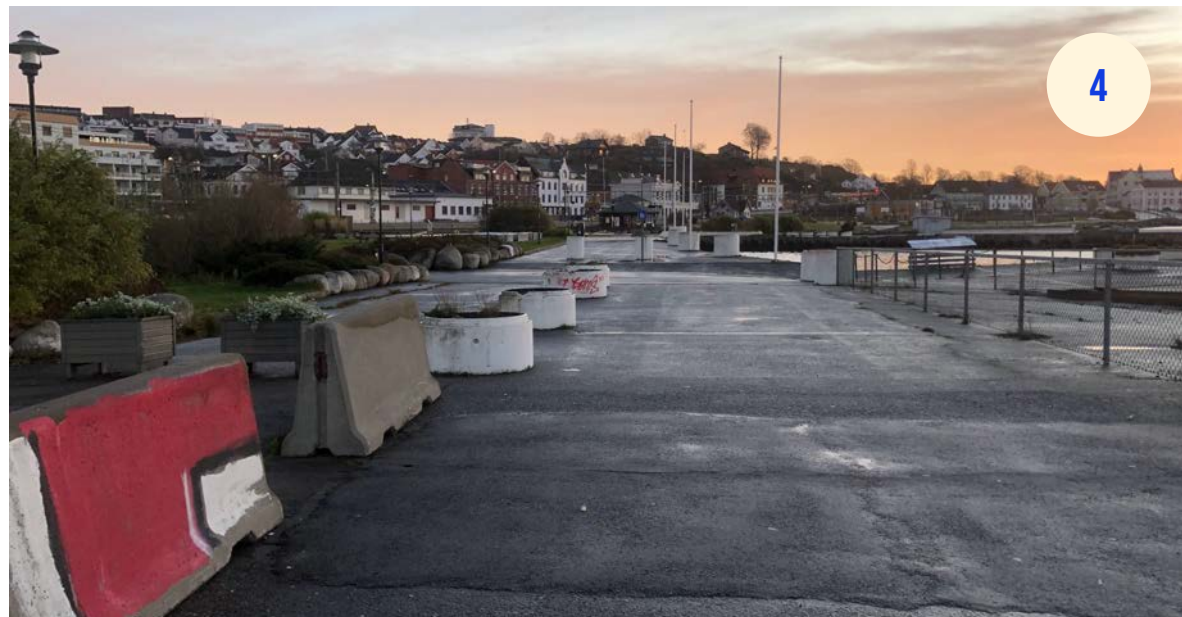
The project site seen from the pier

1

2

3

4



The harbour is today a parking lot. But it has been decided to open it up and recreate the old harbour.

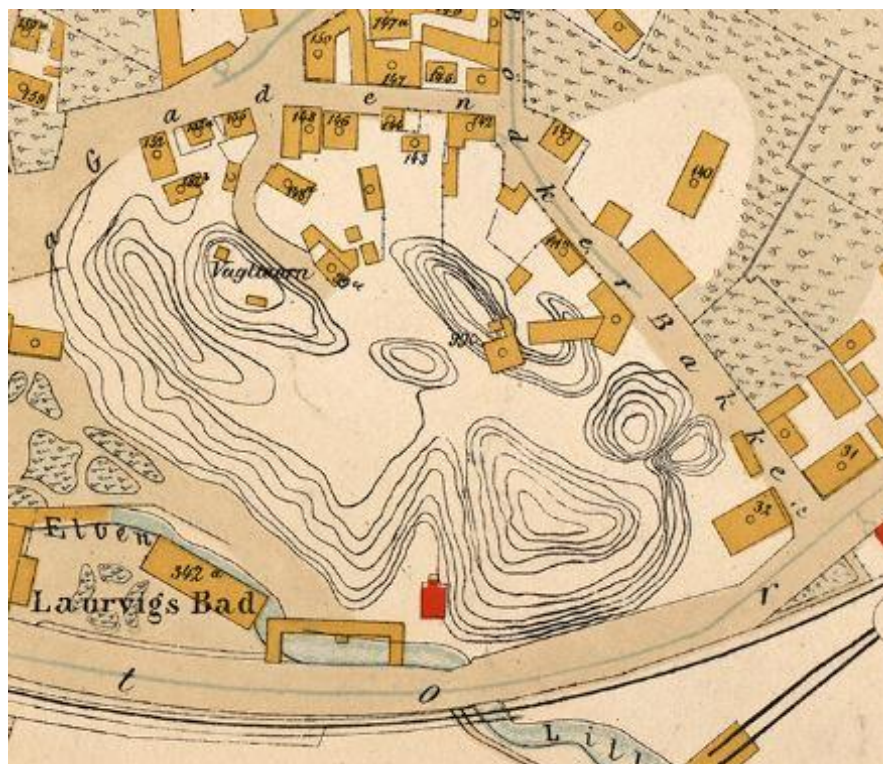
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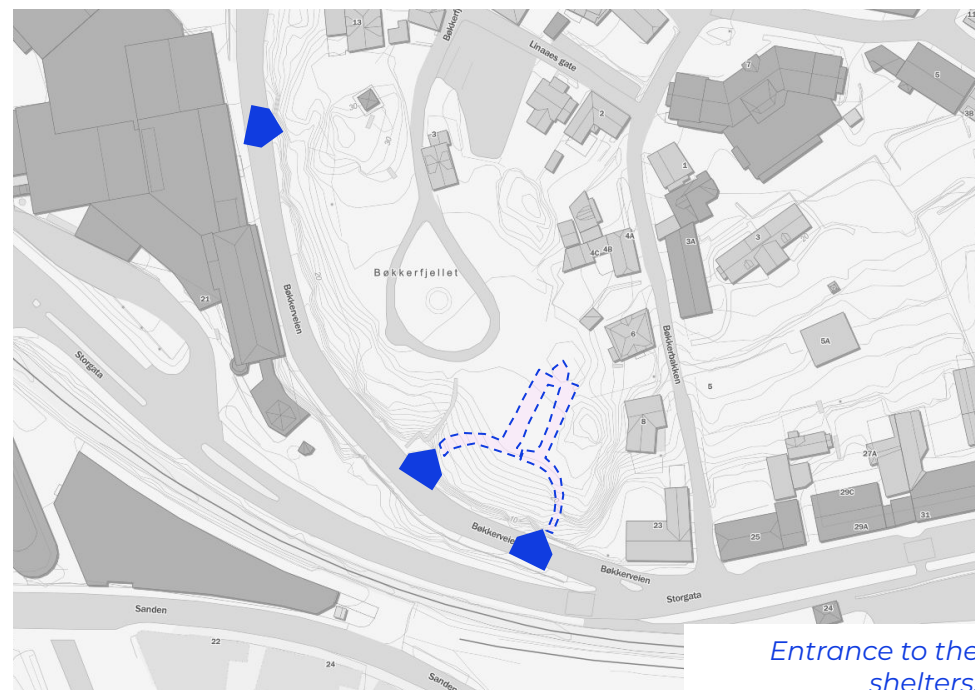
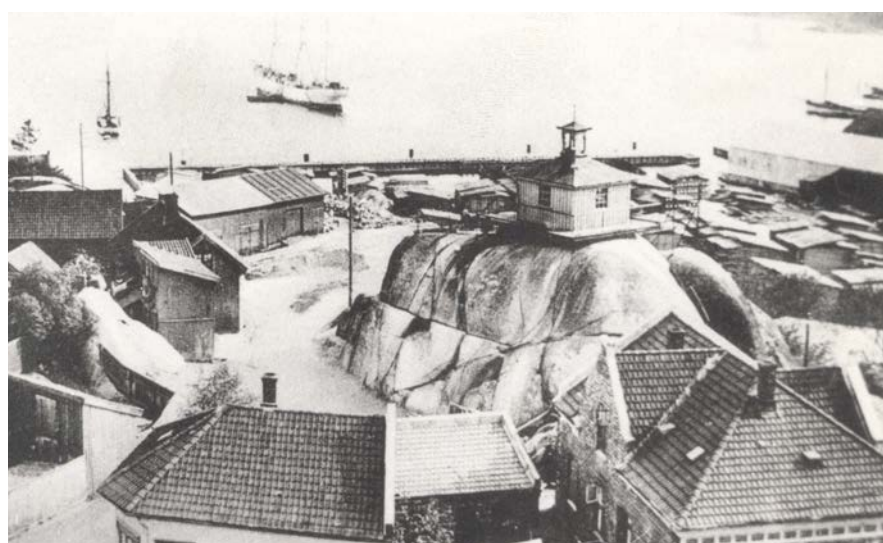
## Bøkkerfjellet - a swiss cheese rock

### A historical quarry and watchtower

Bøkkerfjellet, a cliff that sits right in the middle of the town centre in Larvik, is made of larvikite. Since the 1800s it was used to scout for city fires. From the 1880ies to the 1930's a large portion of the top of Bøkkerfjellet was extracted and deposited at the shorefront to accommodate infrastructure for the ferry service to Denmark. Afterwards, the excavated area was filled in with soil.



In the map from 1884, it can be noticed from the topography that the top of Bøkkerfjellet was in fact higher than the current peak, where the Fire Watch tower stands today.



Entrance to the shelters.



### Bomb Shelters

Bøkkerfjellet contains several tunnels that were used as bomb shelters from the Second World War up until the 1990s. While they once contained ventilation systems, electricity, water and food storage, today all the technical infrastructure has been removed. As a result they provide no part of Larvik's emergency contingency infrastructure and can be used, altered or otherwise made part of the competition proposals. Inside Bøkkerfjellet there are two bomb shelters reached by three entrances from the foot of the mountain and the street below.

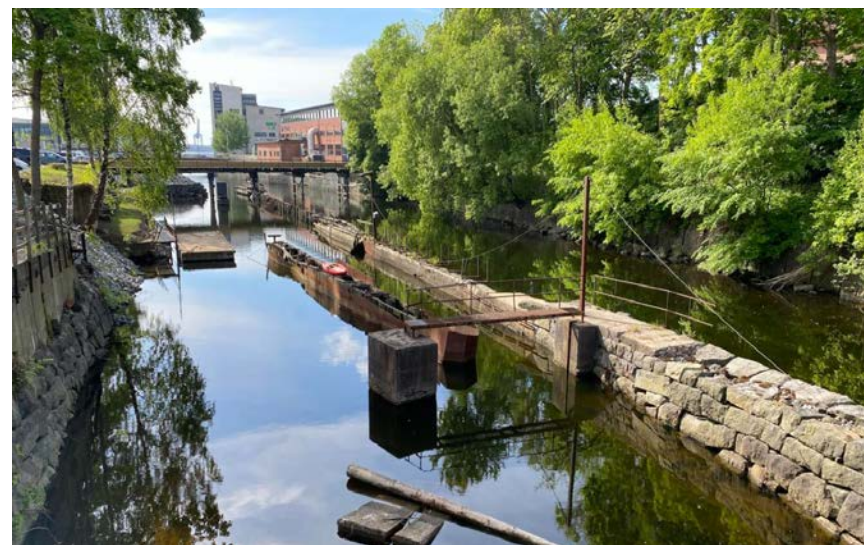




## Barriers

The infrastructure that passes directly south of Bøkkerfjellet provides a significant barrier when it comes to moving across this part of the town centre as a pedestrian or cyclist. Both the Inter City railway and the town's busiest road pass through this area. In addition, there are few crossing points which restrict freedom of pedestrian movement and level of connectivity between the upper and lower parts of the town centre. This situation is disadvantageous when it comes to connectivity within the project area, between the seafront and Bøkkerfjellet park.

In addition to the barrier caused by infrastructure, the topography of the project area itself provides a mental barrier for many people. Although the difference in elevation is relatively modest by Norwegian standards, it means moving from the harbour area to Bøkkerfjellet and the town centre requires traversing some very steep hills or a long set of stairs that are not particularly pedestrian friendly. This barrier is particularly pronounced for elderly people, people with disabilities or people who are physically unfit, and makes movement within the project area and between these parts of the city centre unattractive for many.



## Indre Havn

New urban development projects have already negatively affected the quality of the views from Bøkkerfjellet. The view and landscape could be further degraded by projects such as a new footbridge and lift or by other new development along the railway track. It is important to maintain the uninterrupted view of the horizon from Bøkkerfjellet. The property developer Larvik Indre Havn AS has a land lease agreement for 200 years with the railway company Bane NOR for remaining areas within the plot boundary.

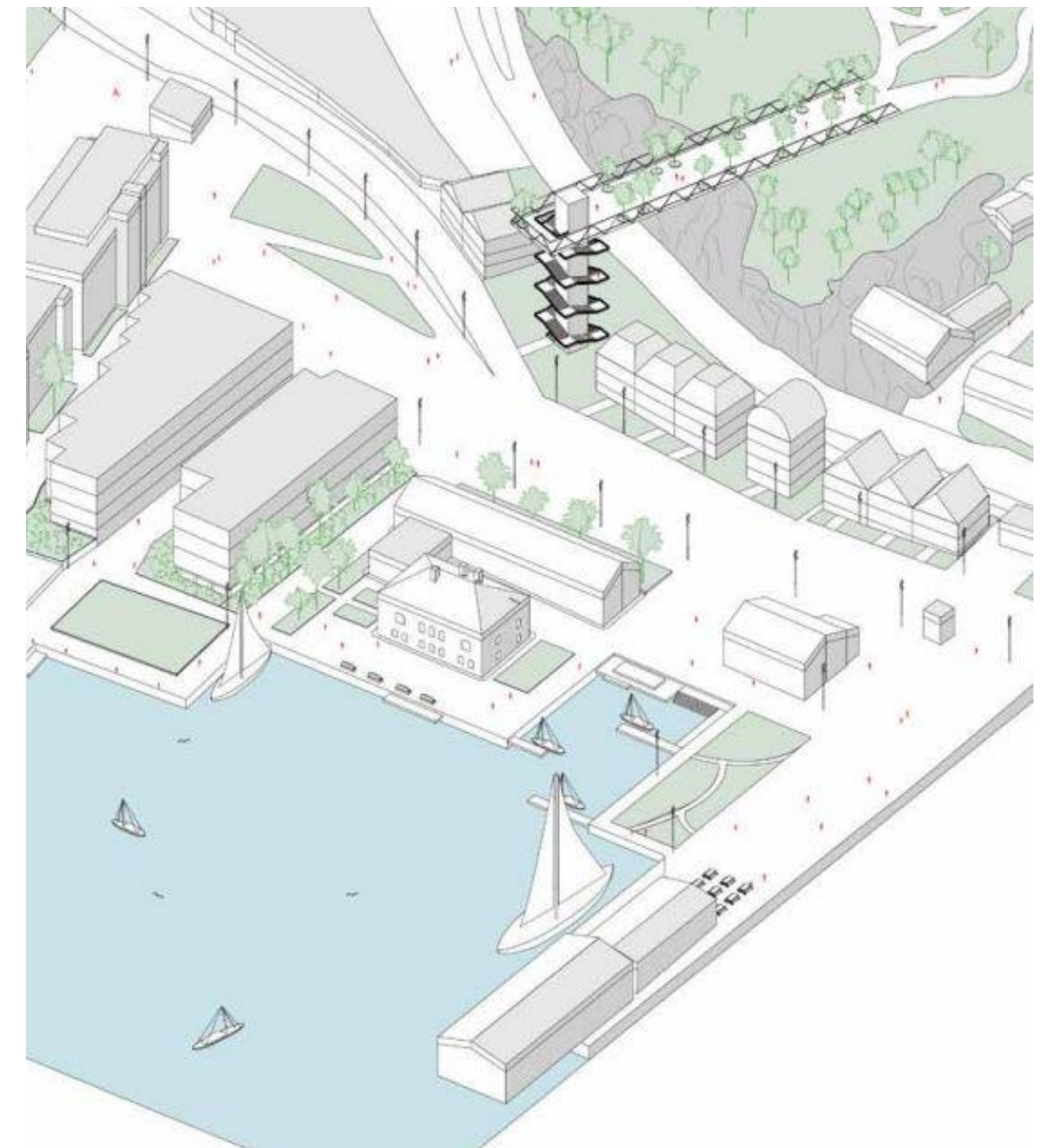


Illustration from a former feasibility study of the reopening of the harbour, more housing, and a lift and footbridge connecting to Bøkkerfjellet.





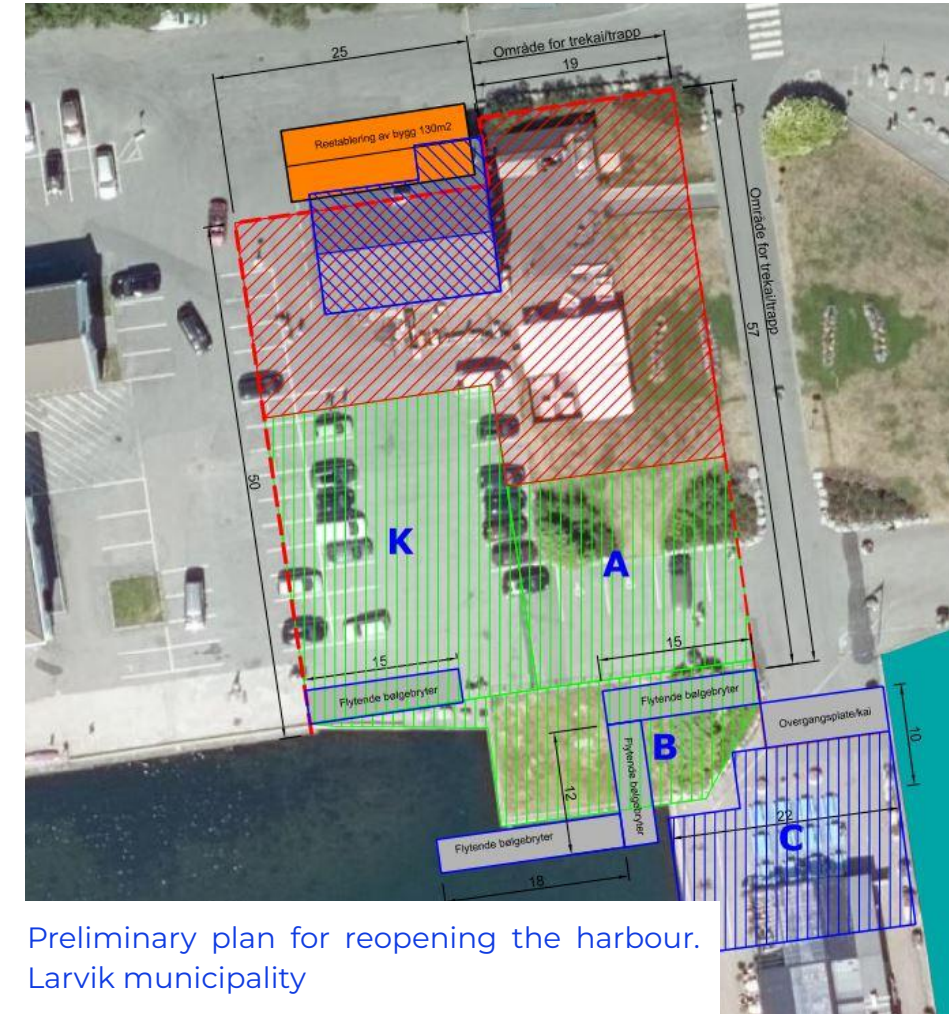
## Reopening the harbour

Today, the harbour is mostly used for parking. The parking is free, so it is a popular spot especially among commuters. The parking sits on filled in land, which previously featured a much larger recess used by fishing boats. As ships got bigger and a car ferry connection between Larvik and Denmark was established, the space was needed for parking and vehicle logistics. The inner part (red hatch) was filled in, while the outer part (green hatch), was covered with prefabricated concrete elements.

In 2008, the ferry service was moved away from the area and relocated to the port of Larvik and now the concrete elements of the parking lot are starting to fail. Instead of fixing them, it has been decided to restore the harbour to its original shape. The concrete elements will be removed, and the infill excavated (red hatch). The building marked in a blue hatch will be demolished.

A new report from february 2023 shows that the pier is also in a poor condition, and the entire area has now been closed off for safety reasons.

The urban design, access to the water, swimming and bathing opportunities and the design of adjacent spaces have not been decided yet. Competitors are welcome to incorporate the area into their designs.



Preliminary plan for reopening the harbour. Larvik municipality



Historical map showing the shape of the original harbour.



## Some key elements on the site



### The top of Bøkkerfjellet

The top of the hill is used as a park today.



### Railway tracks

Looking from the parking lot at the harbour towards the train tracks, Bøkkerfjellet and the town centre. Several barriers make it seem far away and inaccessible.



### Main road

From the main road looking across the railway towards the new housing development just west of the site.



### The town square

The town square is a beautiful space, and only 500 metres from the harbour. This is where most of Larvik's specialty shops are located, a mall as well as public administration. In the summer, people prefer to be by the sea and the centre can sometimes feel deserted.



### Community garden

The top of Bøkkerfjellet is continuously being experimented with. Today there are several temporary installations here. Picture from a temporary community garden project summer 2022.



### Vestre Brygge and Tollboden

The old customs building at the harbour is a large space with a lot of potential for interesting programming.



# THE JURY

## Jacob Kamp

Partner and creative director at 1:1 Landskab



Jacob Kamp is a renowned Danish landscape architect; as head of 1:1 Landskab he has distinguished himself with a number of won competitions and award-winning projects. Jacob studied landscape architecture at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in Copenhagen and the École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage in Versailles, France. In parallel with his practice he has been Chairman of the Association of landscape architects in Denmark, and is currently member of the royal academy's council, the adviser of the Danish State on aesthetic and artistic issues. He has since 2011 served as external juror in a number of large architectural competitions across Denmark. He is external examiner for landscape architecture and planning at the architectural schools in Copenhagen and Aarhus and at the university in Copenhagen.

## Ida Winge Andersen

Architect, company director and partner at Rebuilding.



Ida holds a master's degree from Lund and Oslo (2004). In 2005 she won European 8 Kirkenes with Ines Almeida and has since then worked as an architect, teacher, lecturer, and critic.

She has gained significant experience both as an architect and company leader at Ghilardi+Hellsten and since 2017 as head of the Oslo-based architectural firm Rebuilding, specializing in transformative reuse.

Ida has a unique expertise in urban revitalization and preservation and believes that any structure should be seen as an asset. Her work spans from smaller temporary projects to large urban developments, like Aker Brygge, the post-modern complex St Olav in Stavanger and large-scale strategic development in Kiruna.

## Eli Grønn

M. of Architecture and Urbanism MNAL, partner and leader for Urbanism and Planning with Dyrvik Architects.



Eli Grønn completed a Masters in architecture at Trondheim University (NTNU) in 2007, and Masters of Urbanism at Barcelona ETSAB in 2012. Eli has worked with three European competitions, Sion (CH) E9, Oslo (NO) E11, Irun (ES) E13. All of these submissions were finalists and have been further developed for clients.

Eli has international experience through her work and studies. She is now partner at Dyrvik Architects. The practice is engaged in architecture from early planning studies through to detailed design and construction. The practice has a particular focus on how architecture and urbanism influence the day to day lives of the populace. Eli is an active and engaged professional with a particular interest in the processes of urban transformation and its effect on the wider community.

## Luis Basabe Montalvo

Founding partner of ARENAS BASABE PALACIOS ARQUITECTOS



LUIS BASABE MONTALVO (1975) has been teaching architecture and urban design at ETSAM (Madrid) since 2003. From 2014 to 2018 he has been Visiting Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano.

He is a founding partner of ARENAS BASABE PALACIOS ARQUITECTOS, an office for architecture and urbanism based in Madrid, with projects in different European countries. Their work has obtained numerous distinctions, such as the COAM-Prize in 2022, the Holcim Award Bronze Europe in 2014, or the EUROPAN competition, in which they have been awarded six times.

## Katariina Haigh

Architect, Project Development Director at Asuntosäätiö



Katariina Haigh graduated as a housing design major in 2002 from Helsinki University of Technology, also carrying out studies at Tampere University of Technology and the Ecole d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville. She started her career in urban planning as the city architect of Lohja, a medium-sized town in Southern Finland. Looking to refocus on real estate development, Katariina then undertook real estate economy studies before working in management and executive roles at Nordic construction company NCC. She then joined Nordic housing developer Bonava and later Asuntosäätiö, a non-profit organisation which has a long history as a city developer and holds one of the largest Finnish housing portfolios. As a project development director, Katariina's responsibilities cover land acquisition, portfolio management and real estate development.

## Ilkka Törmä

Architect, urban designer and researcher, editor-in-chief at Outlines



Ilkka works within urban design and city planning at Tommila Architects in Helsinki. He has an extensive experience in competitions and master plans, often for heritage sites, such as a ceramic factory block in Helsinki.

Ilkka's research has focused on urban heritage. He explores how the dynamic relationship between architecture and public life evolves. He has studied how Victorian high streets have adapted in London and how a Mexican historical square functioned socially and culturally. Ilkka has taught, lectured, and been a guest critic in Finland, England, and Mexico. He has founded

Mushrooming, an award-winning online agent for creative workspaces. Ilkka's most recent project is Outlines, a forum he founded to promote dialogue in Finnish landscape architecture and urban design.

## Eili Vigestad Berge

Director of sustainability and public relations at Mustad Eiendom



Eili Vigestad Berge is currently director of sustainability and public relations at Mustad Eiendom. Mustad Eiendom is redeveloping a large urban area, Lilleakerbyen, by Norway's third largest transport hub. Eili has previously held several positions within urban development and sustainability, including Head of Concept Development at Bane NOR Eiendom, Project Manager for the FutureBuilt programme in the Municipality of Oslo and for the Norwegian Green Building Council. Eili was in charge of developing an innovation programme to promote sustainable solutions for the building sector at Nordic Innovation. Eili has also worked as Political Advisor for Venstre, the Norwegian Liberal Party. Eili holds a Master's degree in Communication from the University of Brighton, in addition to a Cand. Mag. degree in social sciences from the University of Oslo.

## Cristian Ștefănescu - Substitute

Owner of a-works Assistant Professor, Bergen School of Architecture



Cristian Ștefănescu is a Romanian/Canadian architect based in Bergen, Norway.

He runs the architecture and art practice a-works in tandem with teaching at the Bergen School of Architecture where he is an Assistant Professor. His work has been shown at the Hordaland Kunstsenter, Bergen Norway, the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest, Romania and at the Architekturzentrum Wien as part of the Vienna Biennale and most recently in the Romanian pavilion at the 2021 Venice Biennale.

## Merete Gunnes - Substitute

M.Sc Landscape architect MNLA



Merete Gunnes, landscape architect and founder of TAG landscape/TAG arkitekter as. Merete has experience from different companies as The municipality of Oslo, Asplan Viak, Arkitektgruppen Cubus and TAG. Her expertise lies in urban development and design of urban spaces, parks and residential areas with projects all around Norway, but mostly projects along the Norwegian coast. She has a strong commitment to the use of local materials and design that reinforce the local or site-specific identity. Focus on environmentally friendly solutions and good principles in relation to stormwater is the basis of all projects in addition to facilitate for social interaction. Currently she is working with different urban spaces and parks in Bergen.



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